

Citizens in Policing National Benchmarking Exercise

Phase One Findings Report

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Introduction

This report presents the findings from the first phase of the national Citizens in Policing Benchmarking work. The national Benchmarking Exercise represents the first of its kind across police volunteering and has been developed as part of the Citizens in Policing national strategy.

Context: The Citizens in Policing national strategy

The national Citizens in Policing Strategy has a vision of “Connecting communities to policing and policing to communities.” The agreement of the inaugural Strategy is an important and timely opportunity to expand our imagination as to how volunteers can contribute to the aims of policing and wider society, and how the experience of being a volunteer in policing can be enhanced. The strategy argues that the political, social and economic landscape lends itself to the development of creative and novel approaches which seek to maximise the use of volunteer time, skills and commitment whilst integrating them further into the policing family.

The national Citizens in Policing Strategy sets out a prioritised approach – recognising the immense value of wider forms of citizen involvement, but beginning with a focus in on those who volunteer directly within policing. This first phase of the CiP Benchmarking work reflects that initial prioritisation, focusing solely on those who volunteer directly within the police service, as OPCC volunteers, Special Constables, Police Support Volunteers and Volunteer Police Cadets. This focus clearly represents only the tip of the iceberg of direct citizen involvement across policing, and future work will broaden the lens to look across that broader picture of voluntary contribution.

A key commitment across the new strategic approach is to be ‘evidence-based’ across police volunteering. Almost 40,000 individuals volunteer directly within police services. These volunteers give over five million hours a year of voluntary service nationally across England and Wales. Yet the police service knows little about these individuals, or about the activities they perform, the return on investment, and the outcomes that they influence. If the considerable potential for police volunteering to contribute to policing outcomes is to be realised, then a much stronger picture of data, insight and evaluation needs to be developed in the future.

The Strategy encompasses a widespread programme of work to build the ‘evidence-base’ across police volunteering, including:

- A **programme of national surveys, consultation and engagement**; to give voice to the 38,000 individuals who volunteer directly within policing. A first national survey of Specials and PSVs was undertaken in January 2016, representing the largest ever survey of police volunteers in England and Wales. There are plans for further surveys and engagement work at a national level;
- A national programme **piloting innovative practice**, and robustly evaluating the effectiveness of new approaches;

- A wide ranging **programme of evidence-based research work** in individual forces, developing insight into current models and identifying 'evidence-based' routes to improving both volunteer experience and the overall effectiveness of police volunteering;
- **Strategic analysis to better understand 'need', 'costs' and 'value'**;
- The **national Benchmarking Exercise**, to identify available data, benchmark practice against other sectors and internationally, and identify interesting and innovative approaches. This report represents the output of the first phase of this Benchmarking programme, with a focus on data relating to those who volunteer directly in policing. There is also a linked ongoing exercise to identify case studies of innovative and interesting practice across forces.

The Benchmarking Exercise approach

This first phase of the national Benchmarking Exercise has focused on building a stronger picture of the data across police volunteering (OPCC volunteers, Specials, PSVs and Cadets), and in so doing also identifying key gaps in that current data picture.

The methodology has been based on three primary sources of data:

- A national data survey of all forces, which was fully completed by 40 of the 44 forces across England and Wales (including the British Transport Police), and by the National Crime Agency;
- National statistics in respect of Special Constables, provided by forces through the Annual Data Return and published as part of the Police Workforce Statistics for England and Wales;
- Other (relatively limited) sources of data in respect of some specific aspects.

Inevitably an initial data analysis of this nature will risk reflecting many of the same shortcomings in the data which it also seeks to highlight; it is only possible to benchmark the data that is available, which then impacts on the robustness of data presented within this report and skews the focus of the content of the report.

- The general picture of current data across police volunteering tends towards a focus on quantity rather than on quality, and upon 'inputs' (e.g. headcounts, hours served) rather than 'outputs' and 'outcomes'.
- The limited official statistical data currently available only covers Specials, meaning this report has a greater focus on Specials in places, simply because there are areas of data only available for Specials.
- In respect of the survey of forces, the reality is that capabilities to answer data questions in respect of their volunteers is still highly variable across forces.
- Adding to this challenge is the lack of nationally agreed 'counting rules', definitions, and frameworks for collating and categorising data, which means that even where forces are able to report their data, there is still not a consistent methodology for recording that data in a way which renders it collectable or comparable on a national scale.
- Finally, the current picture of data across police volunteering has some significant issues in terms of basic data quality; even in respect of the small specific elements of data collected on Specials formally through Annual Data Returns, but especially in those areas of data (e.g. in relation to PSVs) not routinely collected beyond force level.

Whilst this report presents the most thorough data analysis currently available to us on police volunteers, a key message from this work is that the quality and coverage of that data remains limited and inadequate, given the scale, importance and potential of police volunteering.

This report summarises the initial findings from the first phase of the national Benchmarking Exercise work, and is shaped, as is the national Citizens in Policing Strategy, around the '5 Cs' of: Capacity; contribution; capability; consistency, and connectivity.

Summary of Key Findings

- There are a large number of volunteers in policing; **38,000 volunteers** in total, including approximately 16,000 Specials, 8,000 PSVs, 11,000 Volunteer Police Cadets and 3,000 OPCC volunteers.
- The pattern of recent changes in numbers has been markedly different between different categories of police volunteers. The number of PSVs has grown over the past decade, although (as far as can be established from limited data) this growth appears to have levelled off in more recent years. There are fewer Specials than there were 20 years ago, and numbers have fallen since a recent peak in 2012. The number of Volunteer Police Cadets has been expanding rapidly, in particular over the past 2-3 years.
- This report identifies numerous and fundamental gaps in basic data across police volunteering which need to be addressed. Even the most foundational data in respect of headcount and demographics of volunteers is patchy and unreliable, particularly for PSVs. There is very limited data of a more sophisticated nature available, for example across financials, activity, outcomes and 'value'.
- There has been little history of investment in data analysis, evaluation or performance approaches across police volunteering, at either local or national levels; although there have been some recent investments in improved IT systems and related data management processes.
- The hours served by volunteers in policing is substantial; whilst there are data quality challenges in identifying how many hours are served, **an overall figure in excess of 5 million hours per year** seems a reasonable estimate from the available data. This includes **over 3.5m hours served by Special Constables**.
- Methodologies to assign financial value to police volunteering activities are immature and unsophisticated, but an estimate in the region of **£45-75m of financial value** as being representative of the contribution by police volunteers seems a reasonable broad estimation.
- Police volunteering is a hugely diverse activity, and there are a very large range of roles which police volunteers play.
- Many Specials tend to be younger (with 40% under 25 years old), whereas almost half of PSVs are over 55. Overall – and given also the sizeable cohort of young people as Cadets – the age profile of volunteering in policing is younger than in many other public services.
- The whole arena of police volunteering is characterised by marked variations between different forces. This is particularly the case in respect of PSVs, where the scale and nature of PSV approaches has stark differences between different force settings.

- There is only very limited data available in respect of diversity and police volunteers; in particular the data for PSVs is limited. Cadets demonstrate the highest levels of ethnic diversity. In respect of Specials, the numbers of ethnic minority Specials in the majority of forces remain quite small. The proportion of Specials who are female in 2016 is lower than in 1998, and at roughly a third is much lower than for PSVs and Cadets (for both, the figure is broadly half). The attrition rate (proportion of Specials leaving) is consistently higher for female Specials than for male Specials.
- Data for change over time is only really reliably available for Specials. Patterns of changes in numbers for Specials vary widely across different forces, with very little national overall pattern or trend.
- Many forces have ambitious growth targets for their Special Constabularies, but the figures in respect of real changes in numbers over past years suggest many may be wildly optimistic. The growth ambitions in numbers of Cadets feel more attainable, given the scale of planning and infrastructure.
- There appears to be sizeable proportions of volunteer cohorts who are inactive or exhibiting very limited activity. These 'dormant' or 'semi-dormant' sub-cohorts can heavily distort perceptions of volunteer numbers and activity based simply on headline headcount figures.
- There are large numbers of posts dedicated to supporting police volunteering. The real figure seems likely to be well over the 235 posts identified within the Benchmarking Surveys. These posts represent collectively a significant capacity and resource, but there is a sense that there is little collective marshalling beyond work at the force level, and that there is potentially considerable duplication of activities across forces in terms of policy, planning and management.
- It is estimated that direct budgetary costs for police volunteering are in the region of £15-20m, although the real costs (such as time spent tutoring and mentoring new recruits, etc.) are likely to be higher. The understandings of financials related to police volunteering seem to be limited in many forces, and there is little consistency in financial reporting approaches making comparisons difficult.
- There are significant challenges in respect of inconsistency and absence of common standards across police volunteering. Approaches to recruitment, training, and 'independent patrol status' are particularly marked in their variation across forces for Special Constables. There is very little commonality of approaches, processes and standards in respect of PSVs. The national programme model for Cadets does provide a greater sense of national strategy and approach for the Volunteer Police Cadet arrangements across forces, but even in that arena there still seem to be some marked variations in policy and practice.
- There is very limited regional and national organisation, support structures and infrastructure. The Cadet arrangements do have a national resourced programme. For Specials, PSVs and OPCC volunteers no equivalent arrangements are currently in place. Regions do have meeting arrangements in respect of Specials and PSVs, but in most cases do not have any dedicated regional support resources.

- There are some good examples of joint working across forces. The bulk of this joint working seems to focus around Special Constables. However, there is a great deal more that could be done across forces. The issue of lack of consistency and common standards highlighted above mitigate against some options for scaling and collaboration.
- Approaches to 'performance management', and to establishing 'value', are limited across all strands of police volunteering. Performance systems primarily focus on headcount, hours worked, and career longevity. They need to broaden to engage understandings of costs, activity, outputs and outcomes, and to encompass more holistic understandings of 'value'. Performance approaches also need to better integrate into wider performance approaches within forces.
- There is a great deal of review activity taking place across police volunteering. The results from such reviews at force level do not seem to be systematically shared, and there thus appears to be a great deal of wasteful repetition and duplication, and very limited collective learning. New approaches need to be found to better coordinate research and evaluation across police volunteering, and in particular to improve dissemination and translation into improvements in policy and practice.
- There are some interesting pockets of collaboration between police volunteering and other agencies; in particular in respect of PSVs and Cadets and linkages to the fire service, which could be expanded further in the future.

Capacity

The Headline Numbers of Police Volunteers

The Benchmarking Survey represents the first-time for several years that a figure for the number of PSVs has been gathered systematically across all forces in England and Wales, showing an overall figure for PSVs of 7,717**. This figure is broadly consistent with previous national estimations of numbers, which have been in the region of 9,000. The table below shows an overall figure in the region of 38,000 for volunteers in policing.

	Estimated Numbers in England & Wales
Special Constables	16,279
Police Support Volunteers	7,717**
OPCC Volunteers	2,900*
Volunteer Police Cadets	11,000*
Total for Police Volunteers	37,896

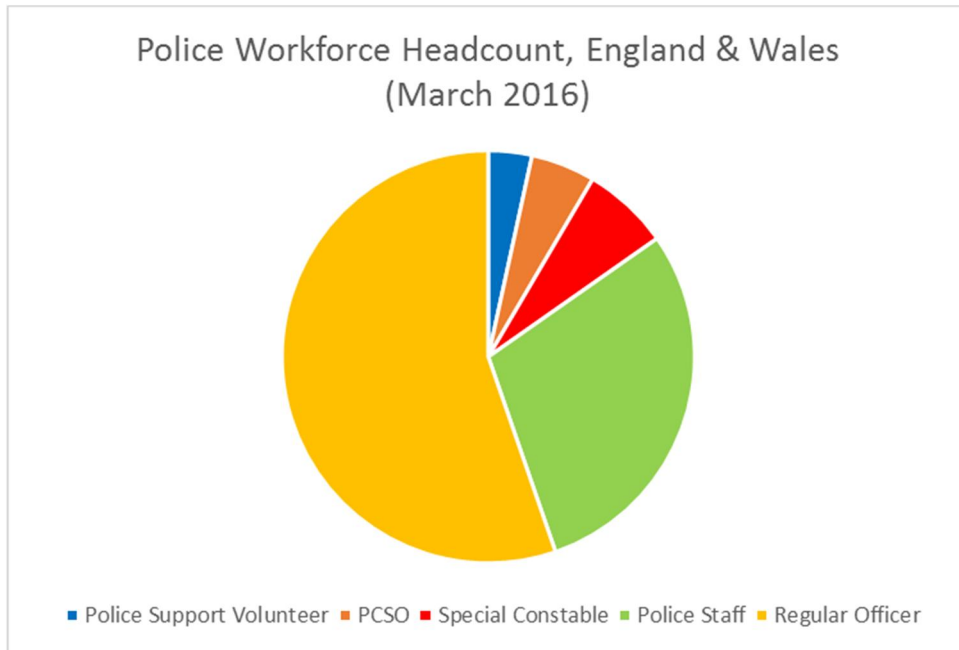
*An estimated figure, based upon incomplete Benchmarking Survey returns

** PSV Figure is still missing two forces, Northants & Leicestershire, but should have that data for final circulation so will have complete national figure.

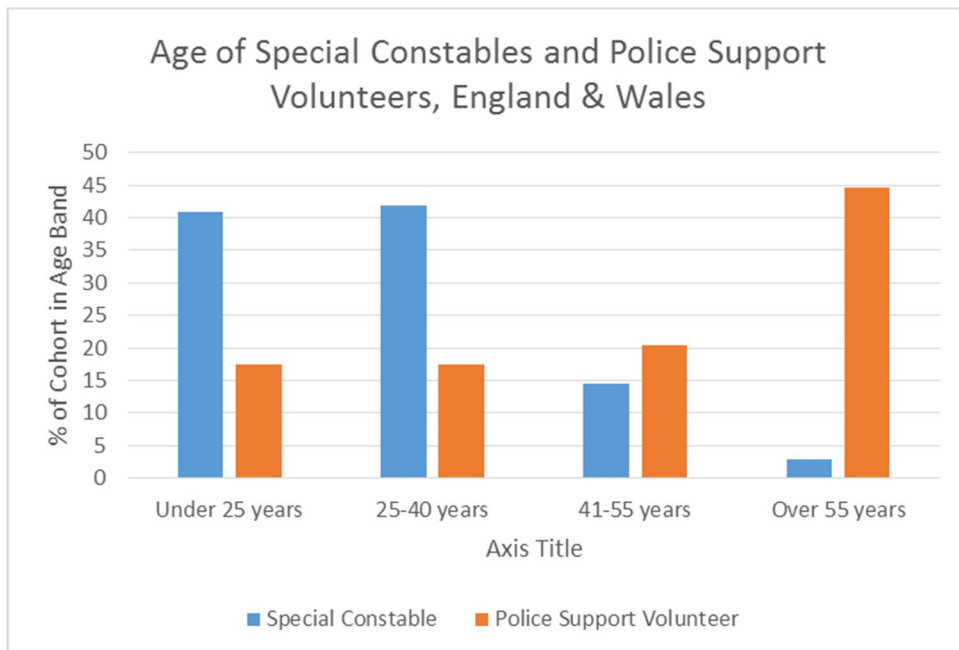
There are ongoing discussions about including PSV numbers in the future in the Home Office Police Workforce Statistics (annual data returns), which would provide a much stronger national framework for capturing the basic data in respect of PSV numbers. Issues remain in the variability of data quality in respect of PSVs across forces. Some forces now have a capability of reporting on the data of PSV cohorts utilising IT systems with a high degree of reliability, whilst others are still at the point of manual counts and estimations. There also remain some ambiguities and inconsistencies across forces in relation to which volunteers are counted within the PSV cohort. These data issues will represent a challenge as the progress towards inclusion of PSVs in force annual data returns continues.

The numbers in the table above show that the scale of police volunteering is substantial, and it should be noted this data is only inclusive of those volunteers working 'directly' within police forces. The bulk of volunteers across policing and community safety still fall outside of the categories of volunteers focused upon within this Benchmarking Exercise, volunteering through organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch, Community Speedwatch, various Warden and Pastor schemes, victim support services, Magistrates, and across a range of other initiatives and charities related to policing outcomes. Overall, voluntarism both within police forces and more broadly working across policing outcomes is on a large, strategically significant, scale.

In terms of headcount, Special Constables represent approximately 7% of the overall police 'workforce', and PSVs 3.5%, both proportions slightly up from approximately 5.5% and 1.5% respectively in 2006.

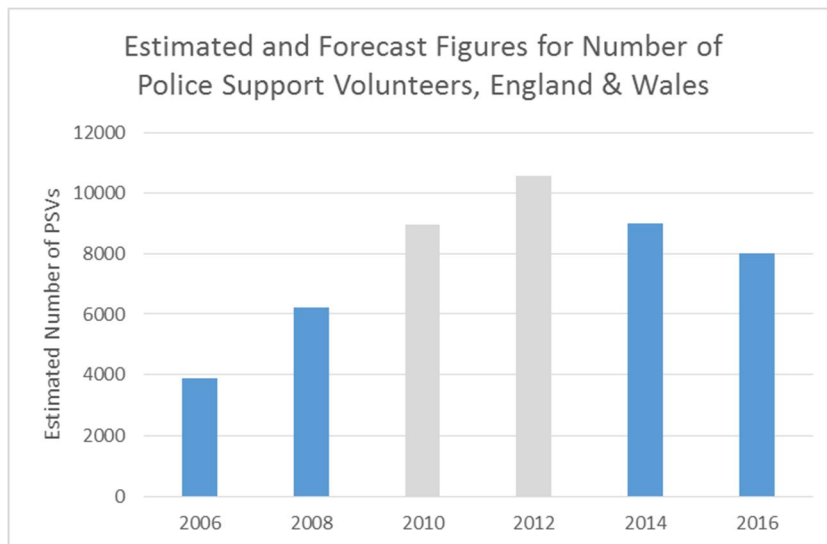


The age profiles for Special Constables and for PSVs are quite different, as reflected in the graph below. There are limitations in the data, particularly for PSVs, in respect of forces ability to report the age profiles of their volunteers; the data below is estimated based upon data being available from the Benchmarking Surveys for approximately two thirds of the volunteers.

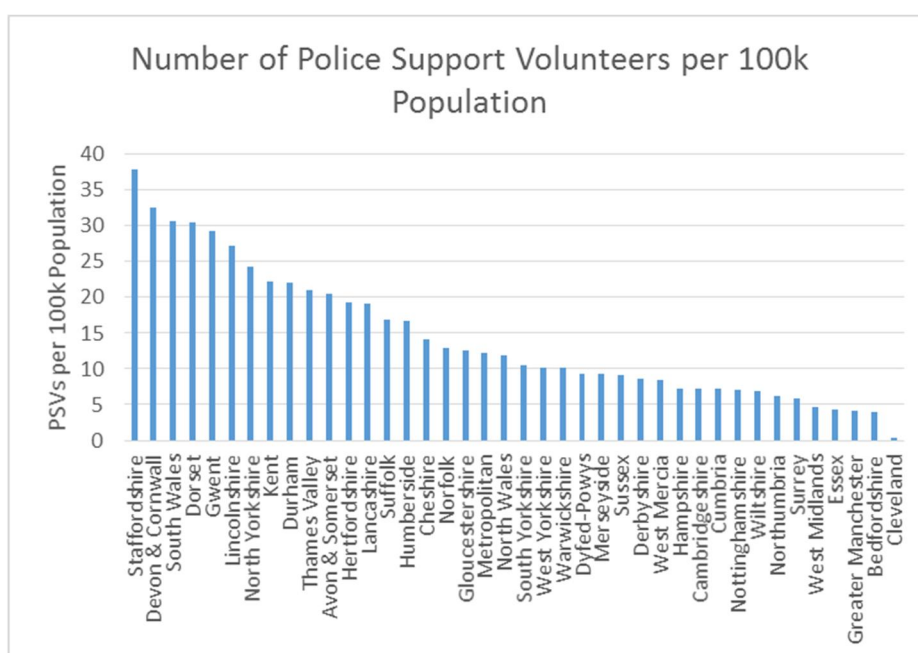


The Number of Police Support Volunteers across Forces

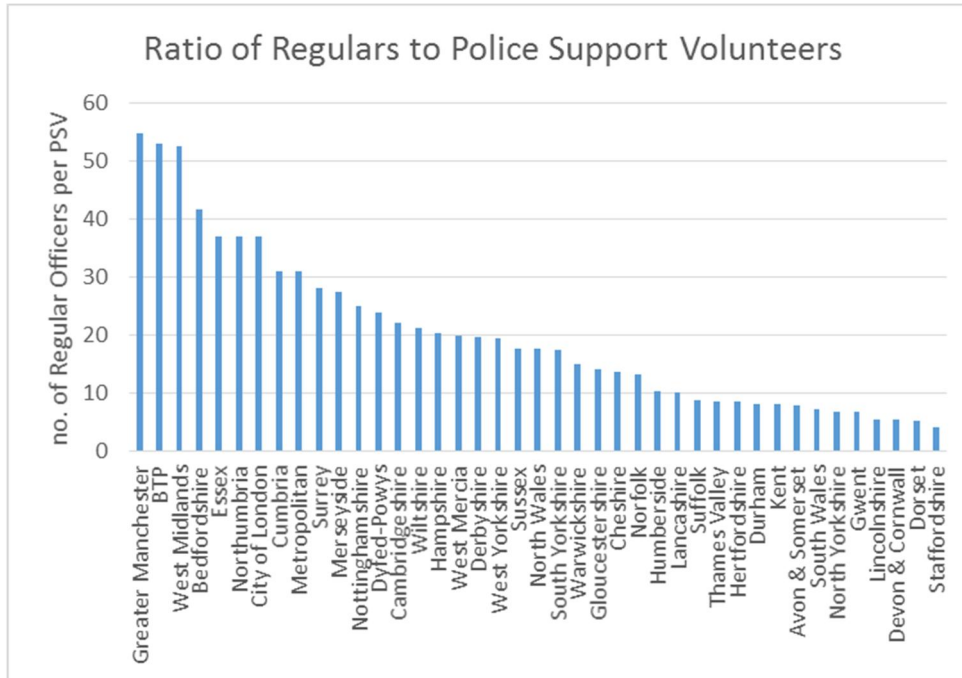
There is very limited long-term trend data for the numbers of PSVs across forces. The graph below is based upon previous national NPIA surveys of forces for the data in 2006 and 2008, (Wilkins, 2008), national forecasts for 2010 and 2012 (again, based Wilkins, 2008), a projected figure based on data established from FOIs from some forces (Unison, 2014), and this Benchmarking Survey for the 2016 figure.



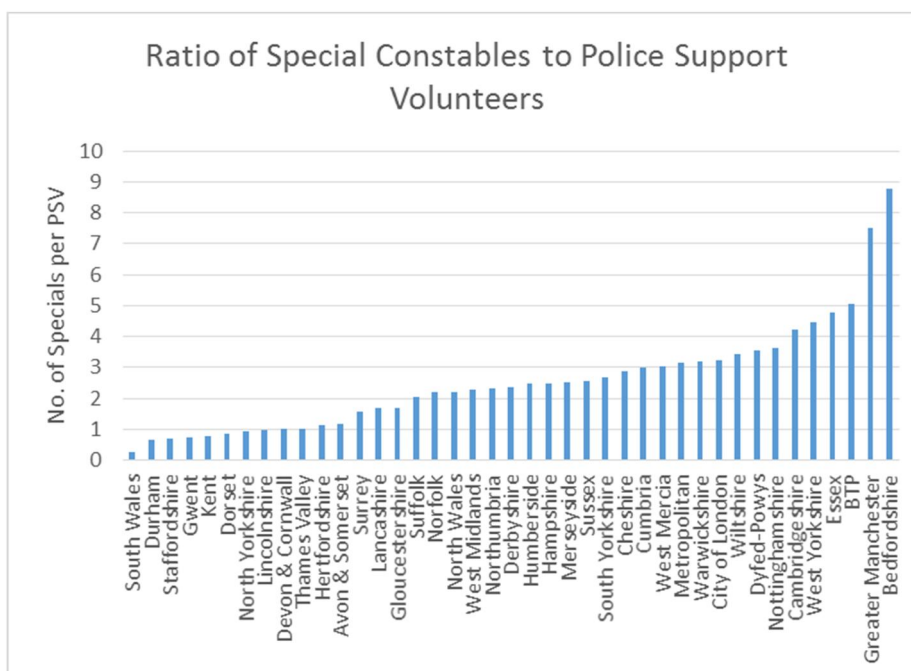
The numbers of PSVs show a particular wide variation across different force areas. This variation is much wider than is the case for Special Constables. The first of the two graphs below shows the numbers of PSVs per 100,000 population in the force area (omitting data for the BTP, which is difficult to express in this way). The second graph shows the ratio between Regular Police officers and PSVs.



As said above, variations between forces are very marked for PSV numbers. In a handful of forces the above graph shows that there are 30 or more PSVs per 100k population. In several other forces, at the other end of the graph, there are only 5 or so PSVs per 100k population, a six-fold difference. In the graph below, the differences are similarly marked. Some forces have one PSV for every 5 or so Regular Officers; in others there are 50 or more Regulars for each PSV.

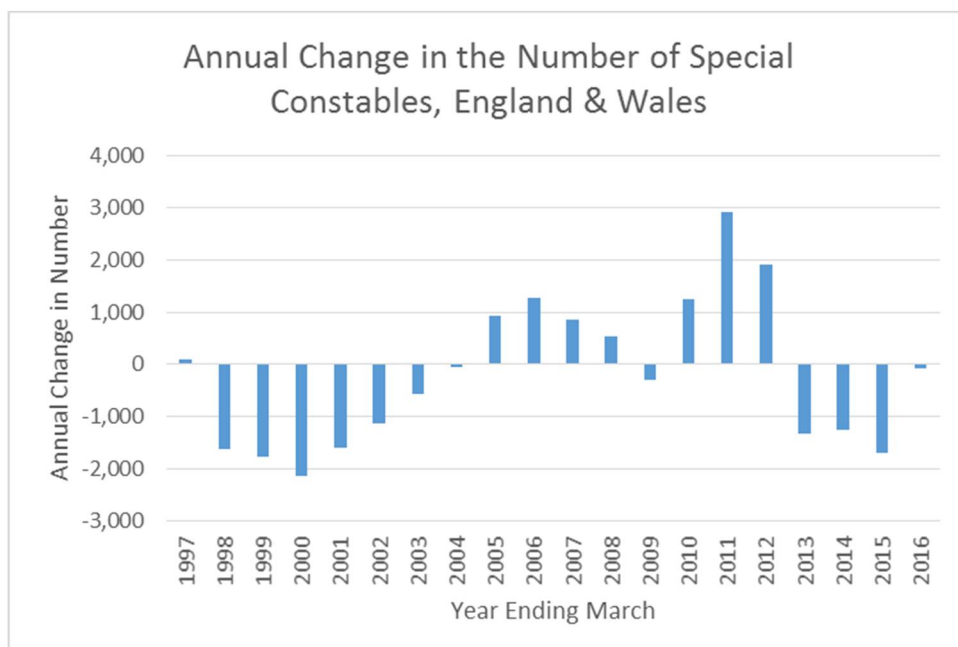
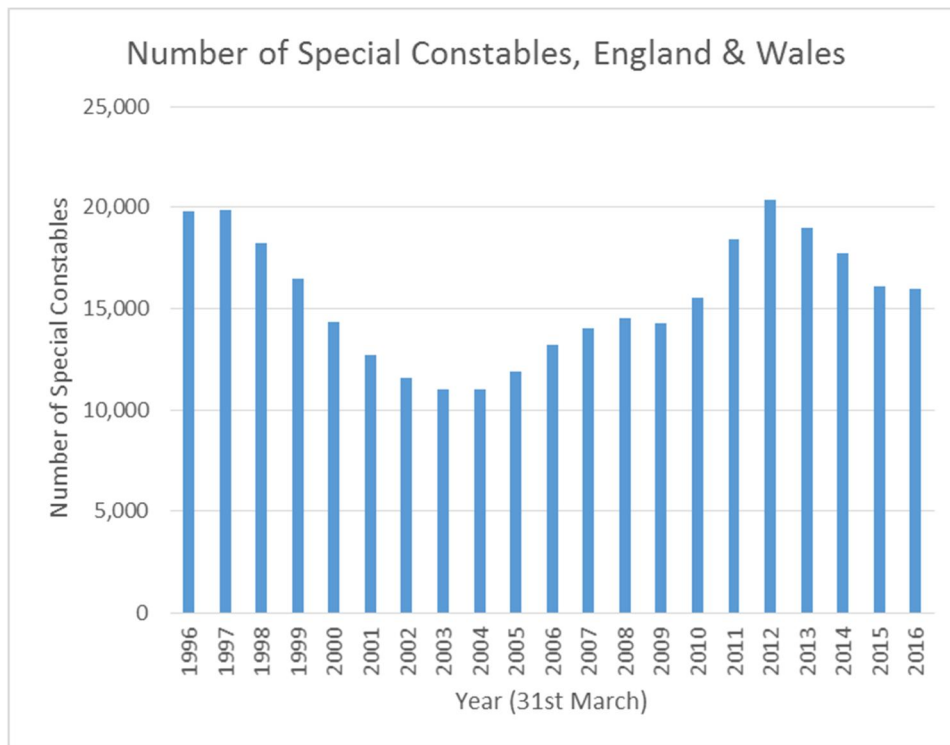


Comparing the numbers of PSVs and Special Constables across the forces is also interesting. The graph below shows that, for the vast majority of forces, the number of Specials is greater than the number of PSVs. It also shows, once again, a wide variation between forces in terms of the Specials to PSV ratio. This reflects that the overall shape of the voluntary 'workforce' varies significantly in different forces. In some forces the numbers of Specials are predominant, with the PSV cohort 7 or 8 times smaller, whereas in other forces there are more PSVs than Specials.



Changes in the Number of Special Constables

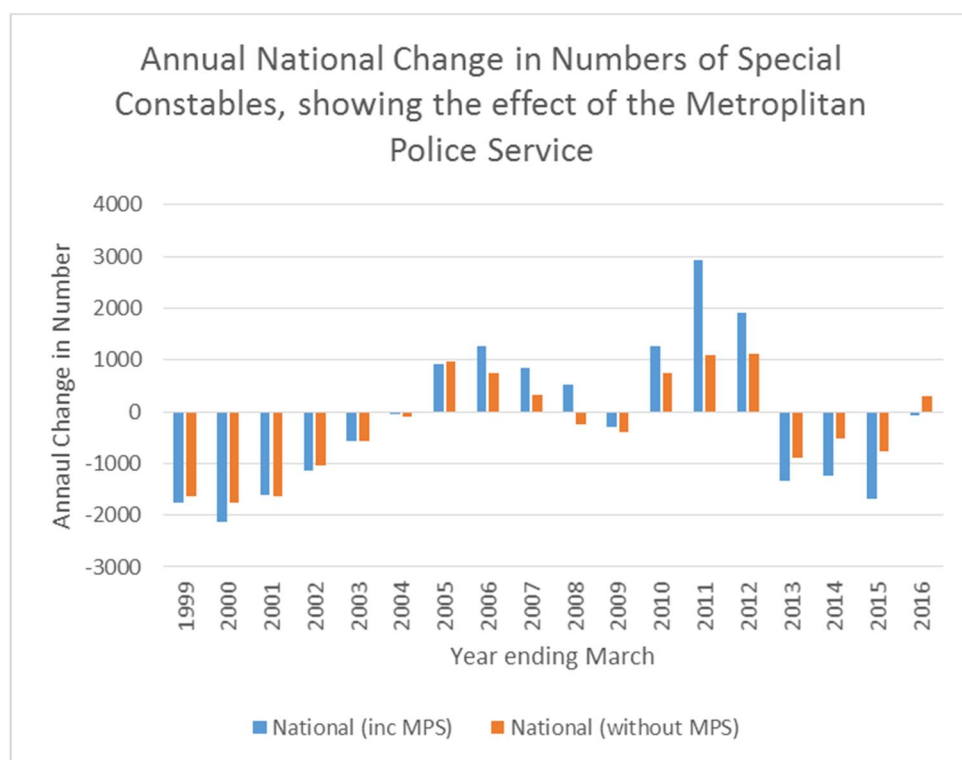
There has been little strategic shift in the overall numbers of Special Constables nationally over the past two decades. The changes in numbers over time are shown in the two graphs below.



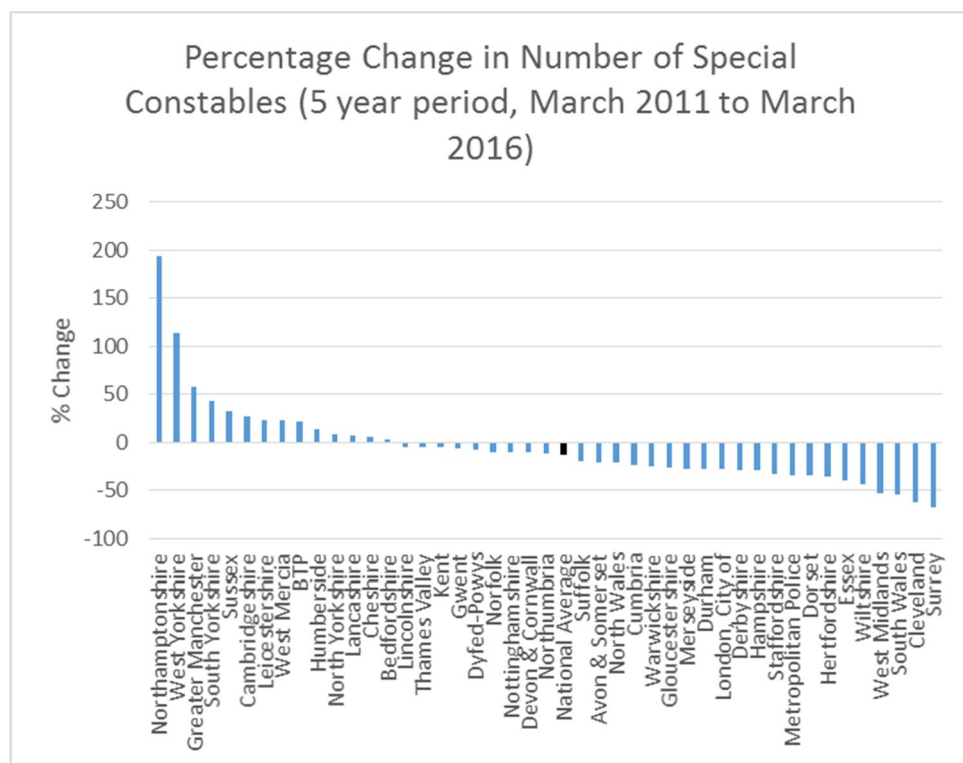
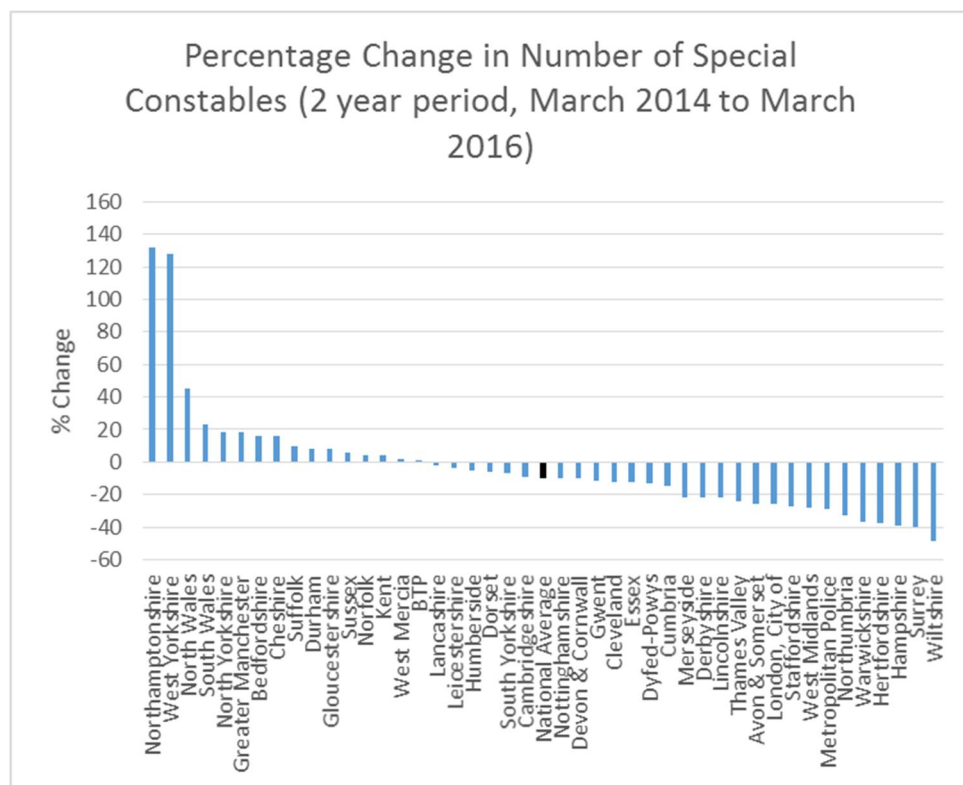
The numbers of Special Constables were on a downward trajectory in the late nineties and early 2000s. There was then an upward trend over a number of years, beginning roughly in 2005 and building to a peak in 2012, which is associated with regional and national infrastructural investment

and recruitment campaigns leading up to the Olympics year in 2012. This trend upwards was particularly marked in the Metropolitan Police Service, with significant recruitment during that period into the Metropolitan Special Constabulary. Since 2012 there has been a trending downwards in numbers from the peak at slightly over 20,000 in 2012 to a 'flattening out' position of circa 16,000 in 2015 and 2016, which is a cohort size broadly at the average of the data over the past 20 years.

Given the scale of shifts in numbers within the Metropolitan Police Service, it is interesting to look at the pattern of change nationally including the MPS alongside the changes for the national figures for Specials in England and Wales excluding the MPS. This is shown in the graph below. This graph does show that MPS numbers have been significant in the overall pattern of change, most markedly representing a large proportion of the growth in 2011 and reductions in 2014 and 2015. The graph however also reflects that both the rise in numbers in the years preceding 2012 and then also the subsequent decline more recently, remain visible in the data for the forces nationally excluding the MPS. There is much anecdotal conversation that shifts in numbers at a national level in respect of Specials are simply reflective of the changes within the MPS. This graph suggests that such assumptions are only partially true; the MPS is only partly responsible for the recent rises and falls in national data, and other forces have collectively experienced a similar pattern of growth towards 2012 and of reductions in the period since.



The above graphs show the collective trend in changes of Special Constable headcount across England and Wales. Looking at changes at an individual force level, there is very wide variation. The two graphs below show the changes in headcount across each force in England and Wales, for a two year period (the first graph below) and then for the past five years (the second graph)

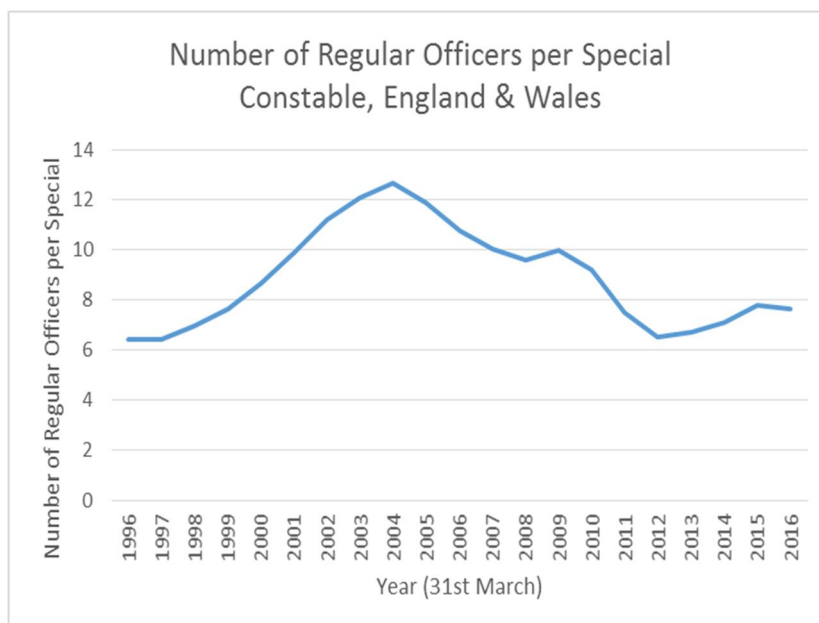


The graphs reflect that a handful of forces have experienced very high levels of growth in the size of their Special Constabularies. Most notable amongst the high-growth forces have been Northamptonshire and West Yorkshire, with several other forces including GMP, South Yorkshire, Sussex and more recently North Wales also showing high levels of growth. In contrast, there are also forces that record substantial reductions in the size of their Special Constabularies. Eleven

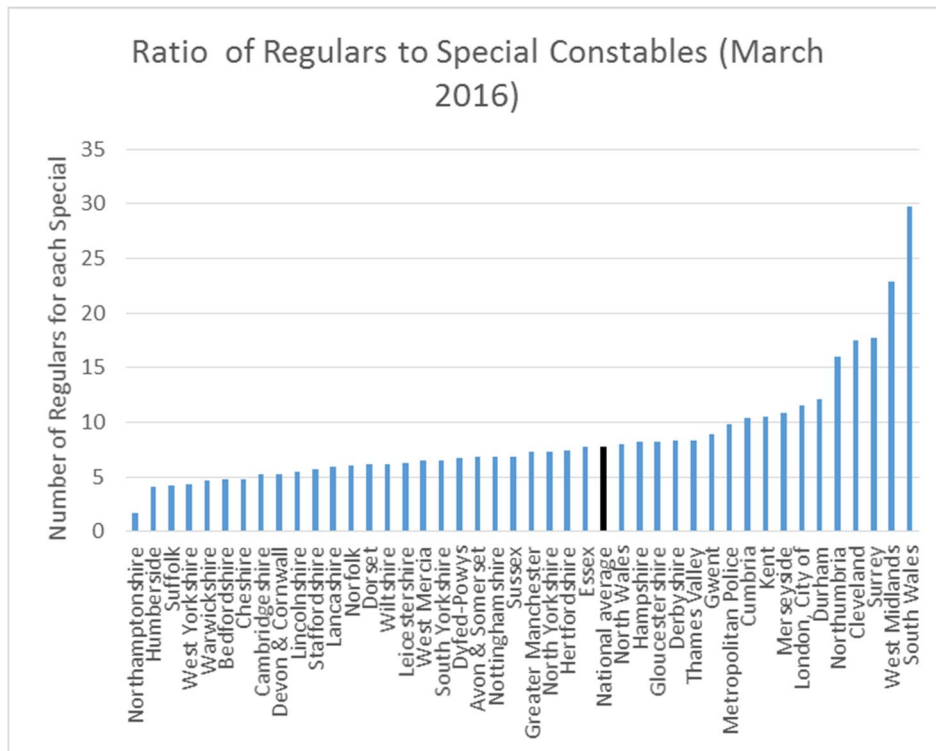
forces have seen reductions of 25% or more over the past 2 years, most markedly Wiltshire, Surrey, Hampshire, Hertfordshire and Warwickshire where the reduction has been over a third of the cohort. Whilst the MPS is predominant, simply because of the scale of the Metropolitan Special Constabulary, in terms of numerical reductions over the period, it is not a particular outlier amongst the forces with shrinking numbers in terms of percentage reductions.

Looking at the numbers of Special Constables in the context of Regular numbers and in respect of force area population, there is also a widespread variation.

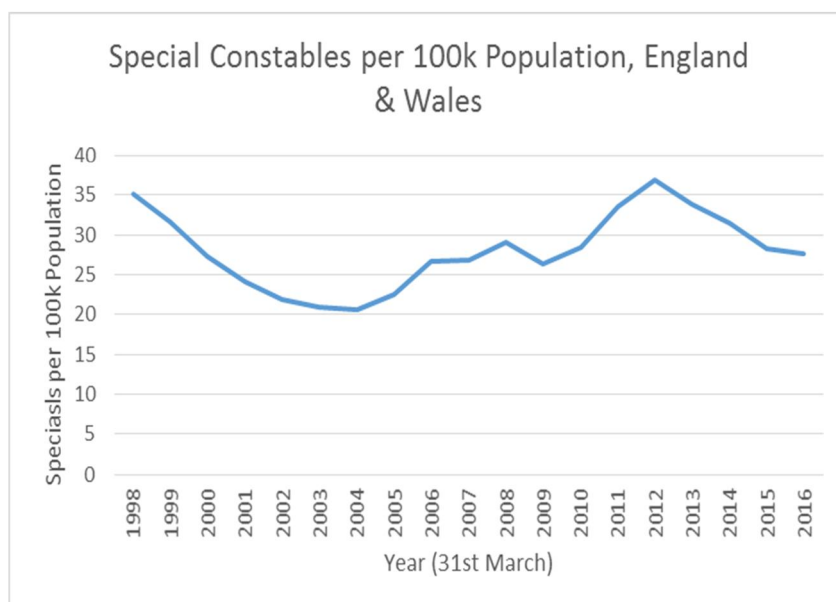
At a national level, the ratio of Regular officers to Special Constables has followed the trend reflected in the graph below; it is important to appreciate much of this trend reflects shifts in the number of Regulars (a period of growth followed by more recent reductions) as well as changes in Specials numbers. What is significant is how much this national-level ratio has shifted over this period covering the relatively recent period of the past two decades; in operational terms a 12 Regulars per Special context is very different to a 6 Regulars per Special context.



Taking the present-day ratio of number of Regulars to number of Specials, based upon the latest national figures in March 2016, there is a widespread variation across forces. In a handful of forces, there is now one Special Constable for every 2, 3 or 4 Regulars. In others, the figure is one Special Constable for over 20 Regulars. The ratio of Regular police officers to Specials is significant in terms of overall operating models. Much of the activity which Specials undertake accompanies or works closely with Regulars, and Regulars play a significant role in the development of Specials capability to practice. The significant variations in numbers of Regulars per Special mean that forces have very different operating contexts in which their Specials 'fit'; working with a ratio of 1 Specials for every 2 Regulars is a fundamentally different context to a force where there are thirty Regular officers for each Special Constable.

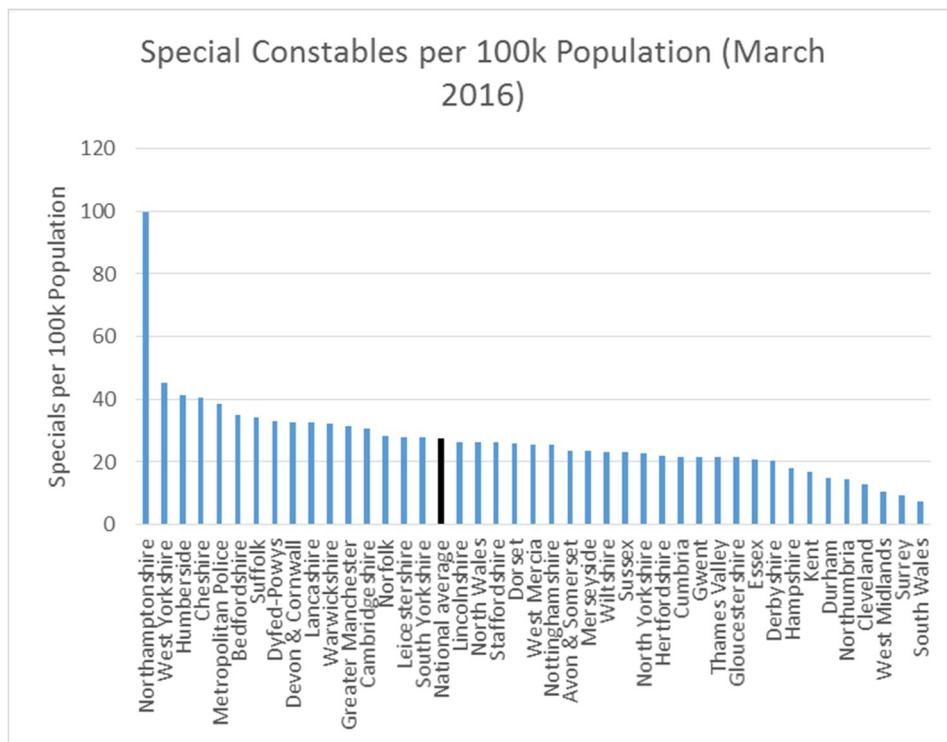


As would be expected, the trend for the number of Special Constables per 100,000 population nationally over the past two decades broadly reflects the same pattern as the shifts in numbers of Specials. The most up-to-date figure available in March 2016 sits at approximately 27.5 Specials per 100,000 population.



Once again, this national figure is an average of force-level figures which show a wide variation. Northamptonshire stands out as a marked outlier, with a much larger Special Constabulary per 100,000 population than any other force in England and Wales at March 2016. At the other end of

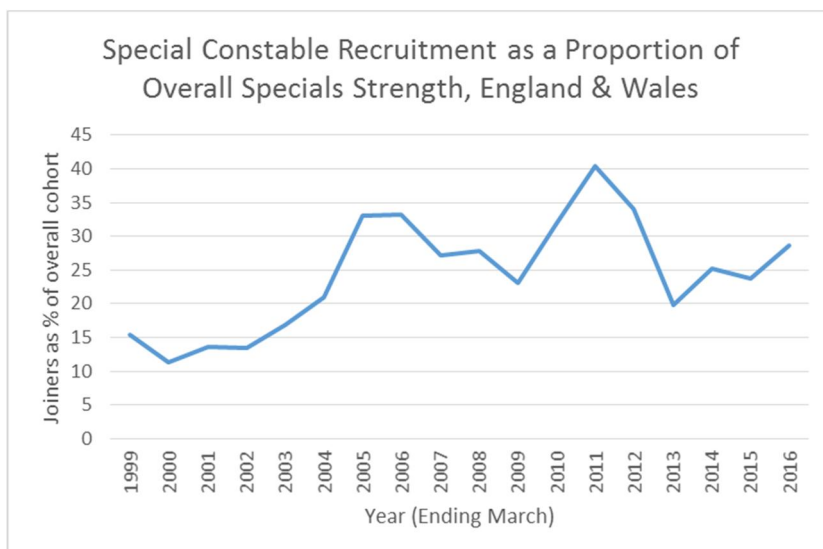
the scale, several forces have Specials numbers per 100,000 population which are significantly down on the national average, including a cluster of forces in north-east England (Durham, Northumbria and Cleveland), the West Midlands, Surrey and South Wales.



Recruitment into and Attrition from the Special Constabulary

Stepping beyond the headcount of Specials, it is interesting to look at the patterns of recruitment into and attrition from the Special Constabulary. In the year up to March 2016, 4,606 Specials were recruited across the forces of England and Wales, representing a scale of recruitment of 28.6% of the overall Specials cohort size, and 4,138 specials resigned from their role as Special Constables, equating to 25.7% attrition rate.

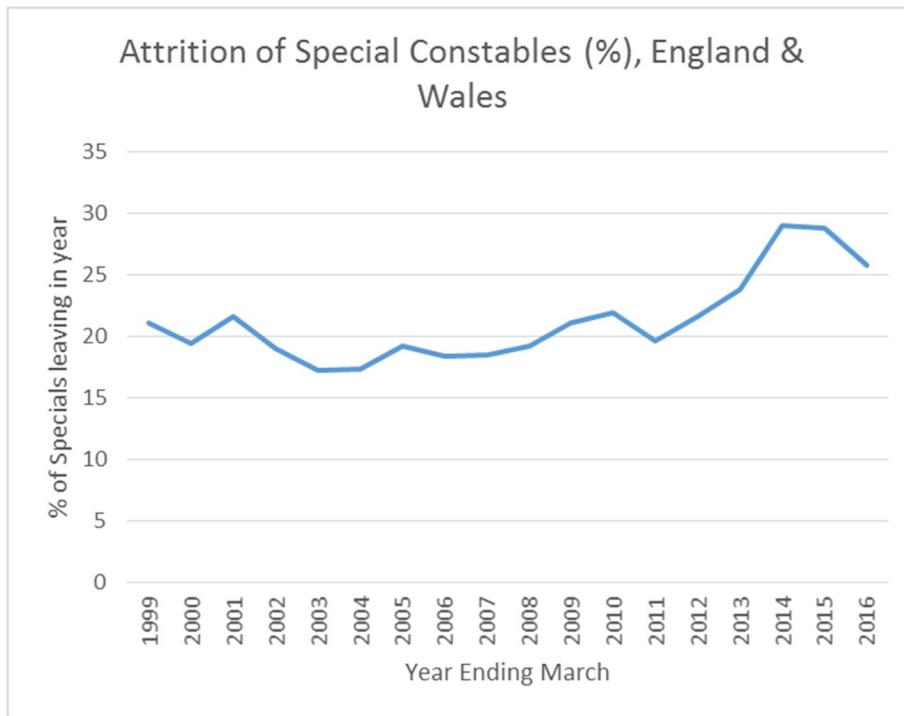
The graph below shows the recruitment rate for Specials as a percentage of the overall Specials cohort over the past two decade period.



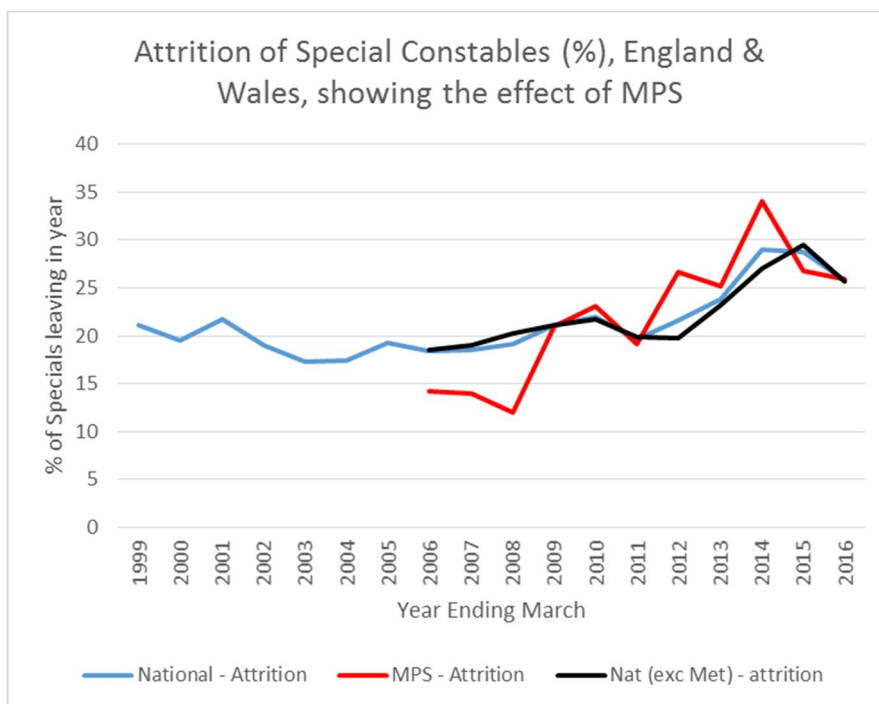
The Benchmarking Survey shows at least 16,000 applications for becoming a Special Constable were received by forces in the past year. Setting that figure against the recruitment volume above of 4,606 new Specials joining the Special Constabulary, suggests a 'conversion' rate from application to recruitment somewhere in the region of 3.5-4 applications for each recruitment.

The rate of attrition of Special Constables is a commonly identified cause of strategic concern for many forces and PCCs, in terms of overall local strategies for Specials. Perceived high rates of attrition are interpreted as reflecting poor value and poor management. In reality, the question of attrition is more complex. The National Survey of Special Constables and Police Support Volunteers identified a sizeable proportion of Specials have career aspirations for paid employment within the police service, in particular as Regular police officers; in that context attrition rates can be heavily influenced by patterns of Regular recruitment, and by the success or otherwise of Specials in being recruited into the Regulars.

The graph below shows the national attrition rate for Special Constables, expressing the proportion leaving each year as a percentage of the overall Specials cohort. The attrition rate for Specials had remained broadly at 20% for much of this period, and more recently has climbed to over 25%. Part of this trend over the last 3-4 years likely reflects a period of relative retraction of cohort size for the Specials nationally, following on from the period of expansion in numbers through to 2012. Looking at trends within the data sets of individual forces, periods of significant growth in Special Constabularies at a local level have typically been followed by periods of raised attrition. Nevertheless, that the rate of attrition is stabilised at a national level at over 25%, and has increased in recent years, clearly signals an area for strategic concern, in particular given the prioritisation in many forces towards focusing on work to reduce the rate of resignations.

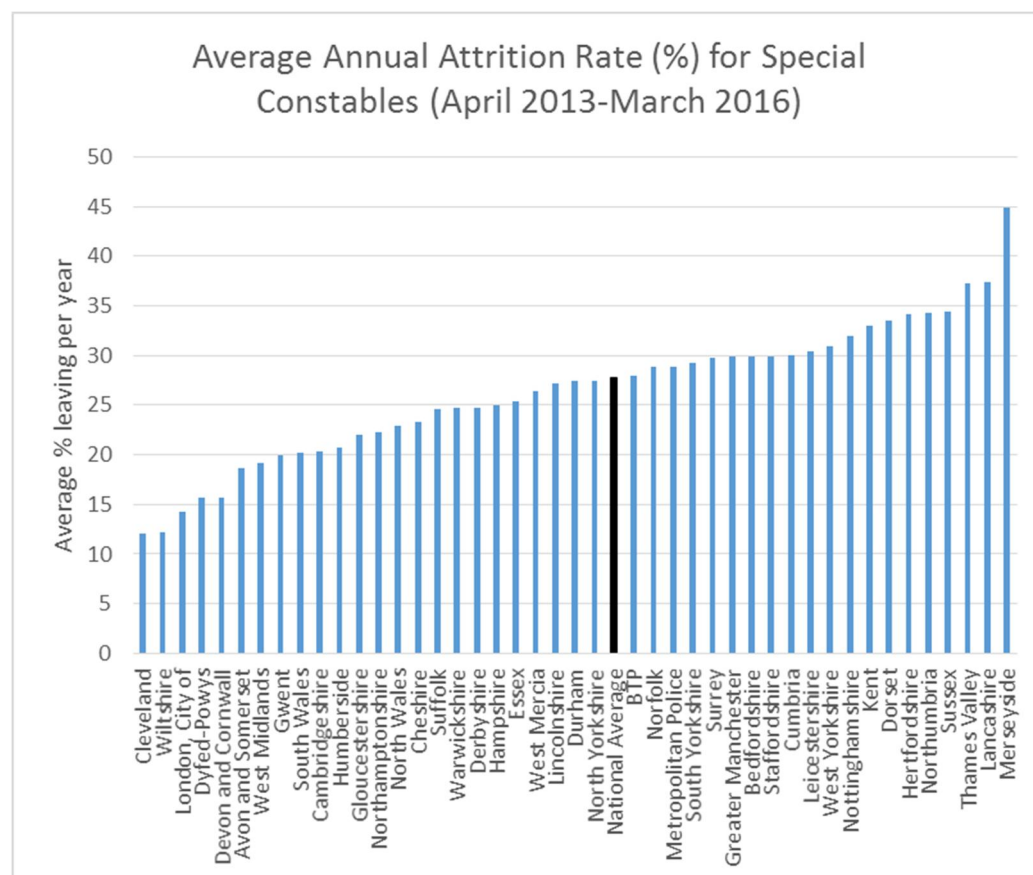


An argument often made at national level has been that the increased pattern of attrition of Specials numbers has been heavily influenced by a poor rate of retention within the Metropolitan Police Service, and because the volumes of Specials within the Metropolitan Special Constabulary are so high, this has shaped the overall national picture. The graph below explores those arguments. The blue line on the graph is the same national attrition rate for Specials, for all forces in England and Wales, taken from the graph above. The red line represents the attrition rate, expressed as a percentage, for Specials within the Metropolitan Special Constabulary. The black line represents the nation attrition rate for Special, incorporating all forces except the MPS.



The comparison of the attrition rates in the graph does reflect a period in 2012, 2013, and in particular during 2014 (when the MPS rate rose to almost 35%), when the MPS has had an attrition rate higher than the national average. As said above, this seems to reflect a typical statistical pattern in forces in the years immediately following a significant growth in numbers. However, the MPS attrition rate was lower than national average in 2015 and at national average in 2016, suggesting the arguments that the loss of Specials nationally is still being particularly driven by MPS retention problems is not borne out in the more recent data. In raw numbers, the reductions in Specials from the MPS are still highly significant, but they are not occurring at a rate which is atypical to other forces.

As is the case with all the national averaging of data in respect of Specials, there is quite marked variation across individual forces in respect of attrition rates. In the graph below, the rate of attrition has been calculated for each force for each of the last three years (so for 2013-2014, 2014-2015 and 2015-2016), and then averaged, in order to smooth out individual 'spikes' in the data for forces within individual years. The graph therefore gives an average annualised attrition rate for each force for the most recent data periods.



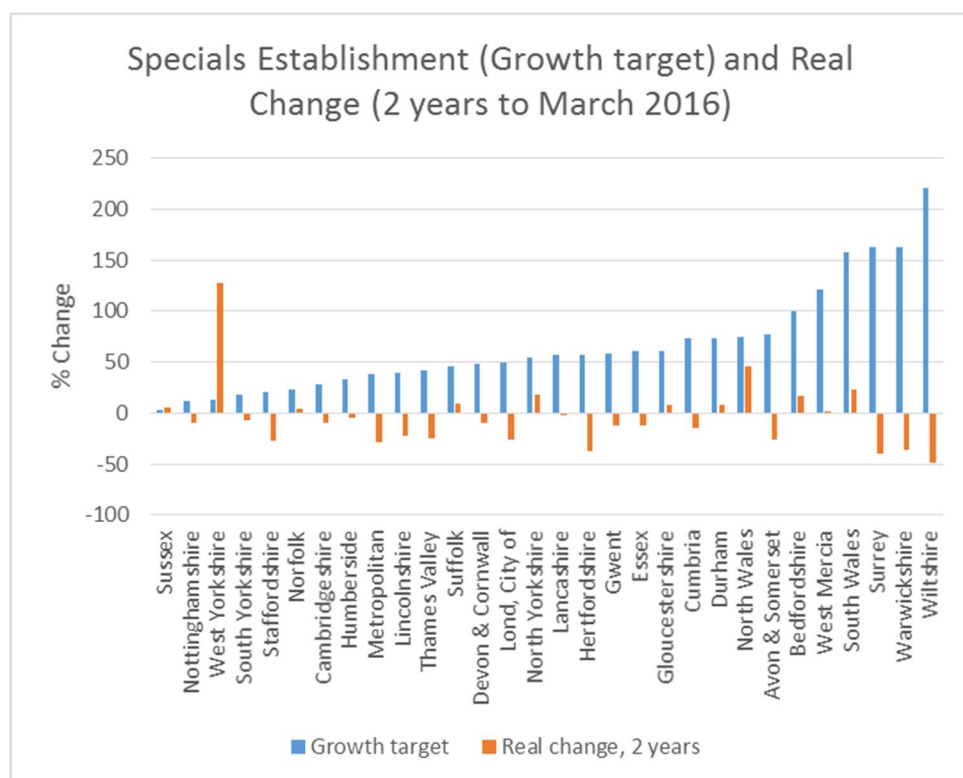
It is notable how wide the variation is in attrition rates either side of the national average. It is clear from this graph that a number of forces have experienced attrition rates significantly higher than the national average, with three forces (Merseyside, Lancashire and Thames Valley) experiencing an average attrition rate of over 35%. At the other end of the spectrum, seven forces have attrition rates of under 20%. Interestingly, in this data neither of the more intensive recent 'high growth' forces (Northamptonshire and West Yorkshire) have 'outlier' positions in terms of attrition, with

Northamptonshire below the national average, though that may change as the forces progress through the growth cycle.

Growth targets

The Benchmarking Survey shows that 32 forces have an ‘establishment’ figure, a target figure for the desired number of Specials which is different to the current ‘strength’ of the headcount of current Specials. For two of those forces (GMP and Northamptonshire) that figure has been set lower than the present cohort size, and for the remaining 30 forces the figure is a higher one. In those 30 forces, the ‘establishment’ figure is effectively a growth target. Overall, it is clear that there is strategic intent in a majority of force areas to have more Special Constables than is currently the case. Accumulating all the local growth targets into a national figure, to reach all the local ‘establishment’ targets would require a 35% increase in Specials numbers.

The graph below summarises the ‘growth targets’ for the 30 individual forces which have an ‘establishment’ figure higher than current cohort. The blue bars in the graph express as a percentage the change that would be required to move from current cohort size to the desired ‘establishment’ figure. The brown bars in the graph show the actual change in cohort size for the forces over the past two years.



The graph shows a wide variation in the level of targeted growth. There are debates and critiques about the degree of ‘science’ in how PCCs and forces are identifying ‘establishment’ target figures, which may well be borne out in the scale of variation across this data, with very different target levels for different forces. For more than half the forces the desired growth is set above 50%, and for six of the forces with the largest desired change, the targeted change involves a desire to double or more the number of Specials. The contrast between the actual growth in the recent past and the targeted growth reflects that the aspired growth is significantly above the pattern of recent change

for virtually all the forces, with 18 of these 30 forces which have larger 'establishment' than 'strength' growth aspirations having actually in contrast exhibited falls in numbers over the past two years. Interestingly, for the three forces with the largest gaps between current 'strength' and targeted 'establishment', each has also experienced some of the comparatively largest falls in actual numbers, with the three forces all sitting within the five fastest shrinking Special Constabularies over the past 2 years (as shown in the graph on page 14)..

The data for PSVs in respect of desired 'establishment' and 'growth targets' is less comprehensive. Nine forces have 'establishment' figures set, all higher than current cohort size. However, a number of forces did not report on this aspect, although it does seem from the data that fewer forces have a 'growth target' for PSVs than for Specials.

Specials Rank structure

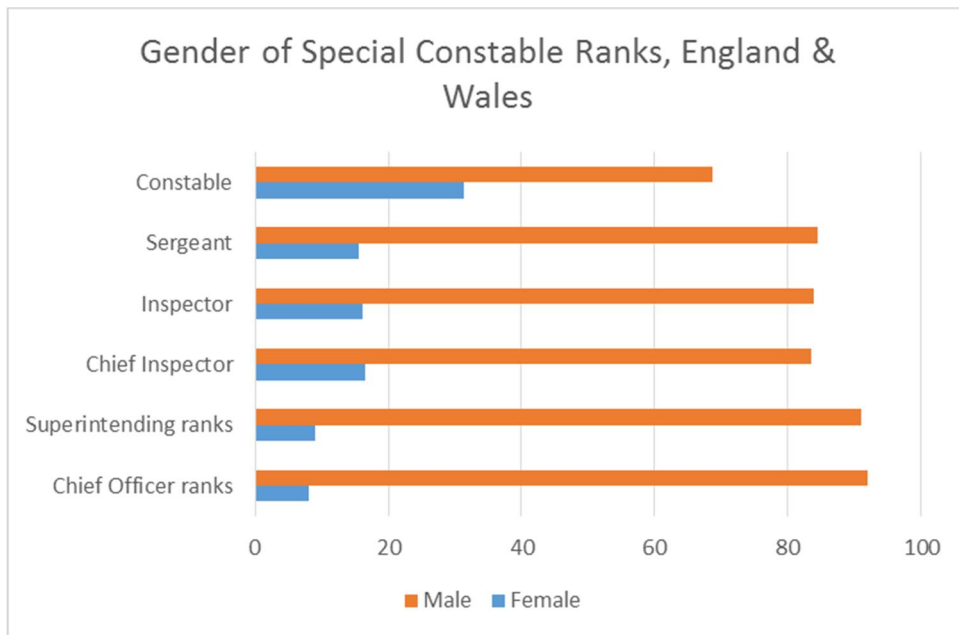
The Benchmarking Survey achieved responses from 35 forces in respect of their Special Constabulary rank structures, so there are some gaps in the data in the national picture presented here. The vast majority of Special Constabularies have a rank structure (of the forces who responded to the survey, Sussex was the only force that did not, although West Yorkshire has a distinctive model based upon Section Officers and Senior Section Officers). The other forces all had some degree of senior ranks, largely mirroring the Regular ranks, albeit in most cases not all levels of the rank structure were adopted within the Special Constabularies. There are very wide variations in the shapes of rank structures, with some forces having considerably more senior ranked Specials than others, and some having many more ranks than others.

The table below summarises the numbers within the Benchmarking Survey at higher ranks:

	Numbers in Specials Ranks, England & Wales*
Chief Officer	53
Chief Superintendent	2
Superintendent	31
Chief Inspector	90
Inspector	367
Sergeant	1,028

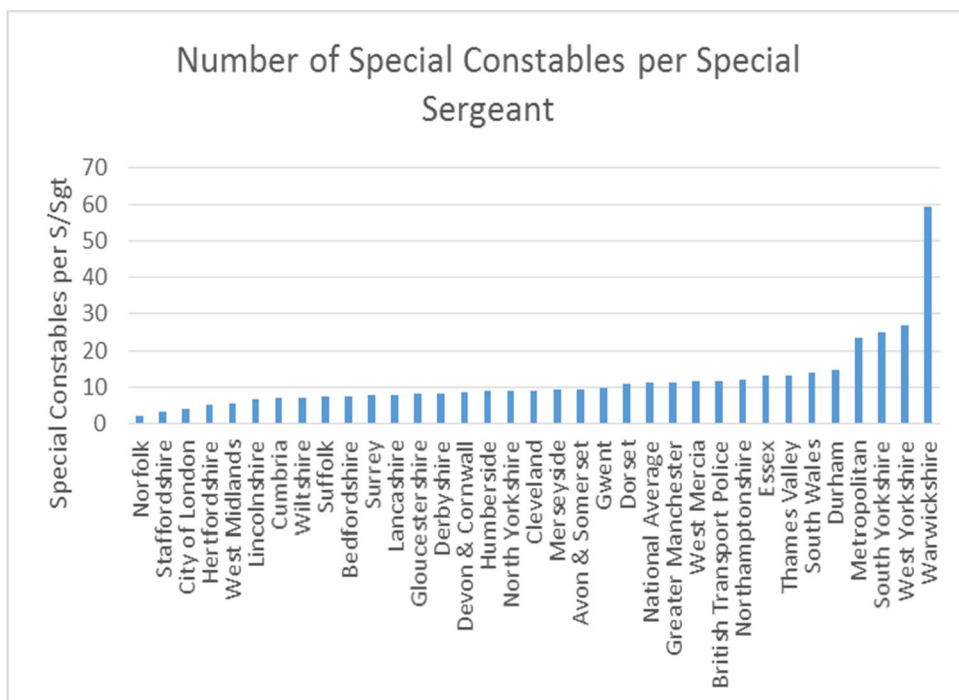
*Numbers for 35 forces, so not the complete national picture.

The gender balance across different Specials ranks is summarised in the graph below. This reflects that there are smaller proportions of females at all ranks above that of Constable, and that for the most senior Superintending and Chief Officer ranks, 9 out of ten Specials occupying those ranks are male.



The data reflects high levels of 'interim' and 'temporary' ranks within a sizeable number of forces, particularly being the case for the Special Sergeant rank.

There is quite wide variation in the ratios between ranks for different Special Constabularies. This is particularly the case for the ratio of Constable to Sergeant ranks within the Specials. The graph below shows the spread, with some Special Constabularies operating at a ratio of a handful of Specials per Special Sergeant, and some operating with ratios of over 20 Specials per Sergeant.



Models for Specials Chief Officer roles vary widely across different forces. There are some forces which do not operate with a volunteer Chief Officer, with that role instead being filled by a Regular. The vast majority of forces do have a volunteer Chief Officer role, but the design and operating of the roles appears to vary widely. The Institute for Public Safety, Crime and Justice has recently agreed a research project working with ASCCO to research across Specials Chief Officer roles nationally, and to develop greater insight into how the roles work and how they may develop in the future.

Employer Supported Policing

The Benchmarking Survey reflects a very mixed picture for ESP nationally, with wide variations across different forces. A small number of forces indicated they did not engage with ESP; and whilst the majority do, the arrangements and approaches vary. There are some large forces which do not have any ESP Specials or PSVs, and other small forces which have significant numbers. The Survey reflects that whilst most forces have engagement with ESP in respect of Specials, a large number do not have ESP in respect of their current PSV arrangements. Whilst there is a national model for ESP, there are also a range of local arrangements. Several forces are investing in this area, with some indicating in the Benchmarking Survey investment in new posts to support the further growth of ESP. In several areas ESP is an aspect highlighted by PCCs as a priority.

Nationally, those who lead on ESP work report that approximately 200 companies are formally registered in respect of employer supported policing schemes, providing paid leave to their employees who volunteer with the police. There are 1,525 Specials across England and Wales who work for those employers, representing approximately 9% of Specials nationally. There is not currently a nationally gathered figure for the hours served connected with ESP, but discussions are ongoing in respect of developing data systems to make this possible in the future.

There seems to be wide variation in how police services manage and support their own employees who also volunteer within the force. In some cases this seems to be formalised, with identified agreements over paid leave, in many others formal arrangements seem to be limited. There seems to be a spread of approaches for OPCCs who have staff who volunteer within the police force; some OPCCs have formal arrangements of paid leave for their staff who volunteer.

Students

The Benchmarking Surveys reflect a variable picture in respect of how universities and their students interface with police volunteering. Some forces report no students being volunteers, others report sizeable numbers. There is clearly, looking across forces nationally, some scale of relationships; in the region of 30 university arrangements are mentioned across the surveys, and given gaps in responses this seems likely to reflect an undercount. The most commonly mentioned type of arrangement is in respect of university courses where undergraduates become a Special Constable as an element of the programme of study. But there are a variety of other arrangements in place beyond that; in some force areas it appears there is considerable scale and innovation to the way students are engaged in voluntary activities with local forces.

Financing

Although the Benchmarking Survey reflects probably the most comprehensive gathering of force financing data in respect of police volunteers, there remain significant gaps in the coverage of the data, which mean only broad conclusions can be drawn.

In headline terms, the Survey responses suggest dedicated budgets in excess of £10m nationally for Specials, and £1.5m for PSVs. Given national and local investments, the cost of volunteer Police Cadets will be several million, but is difficult to extrapolate from the force data shared. Costs of volunteer management in OPCCs is harder to identify, partly because many posts that support volunteers do so as part of a wider portfolio; but the data provided suggest most OPCCs have at least one post, or part of a post, dedicated to volunteer management, and where OPCCs have shared operating budgets for their volunteers their figures tend to be in the region of high four figure, or low five figure, sums. A very rough estimate in the region of a collective OPCC spend in the region of £1m does not therefore seem unreasonable.

The real numbers are likely to be higher for dedicated budgets than the Surveys suggest, given gaps in data, and a dedicated budget figure overall somewhere upwards of £15m or even £20m is not an unreasonable overall estimate from the data shared by forces.

There are also substantial spends around volunteering programmes (e.g. communications, marketing, recruitment, HR support, vetting, training, etc.) which are not, in the responses of many forces, contained within these 'dedicated' budget figures.

Where data is available in respect of trend in investment, the data suggests a tendency towards further investment and thus increasing budgets. There are several examples of PCCs having identified new investment, often at quite a large scale, to support programmes across Citizens in Policing, and particularly around investment in Special Constabularies.

Whilst making comparisons is difficult because there is a wide variation in how the financial data was expressed within the Benchmarking Survey, there appears to be significant variation between budgets. Some forces having very well-funded programmes, particularly in those forces with high growth targets for Specials numbers. Other forces reflect very little if any ring-fenced financing.

The Benchmarking Survey responses reflect wide variation in force estimations of costings. A wide range of different numbers (with several-fold differences in figures) are shared in terms of costs of training and equipping Specials, and in terms of estimations of overall costings. For PSVs, there are far fewer costings shared, suggesting forces have made greater progress to establish Specials costings than those for PSVs. However, where costings in terms of PSVs are shared, once again the numbers vary widely.

Staffing and Infrastructure

There is a significant infrastructure of posts across forces dedicated to the support of police volunteers. The Benchmarking Survey identified 235 full time equivalent posts in support of Specials and PSVs. This is a sizeable number, but is also undoubtedly an undercount of the full-scale of paid roles supporting the policing volunteer base. The figure of 235 is based on only 38 out of the 44 forces, and only 14 of the Benchmarking Survey responses reflected training resource within their dedicated post numbers. Several of the survey returns identified shared resources that were drawn

upon in respect of marketing and recruitment, HR support, vetting, learning and development, and stores, but which were not counted in terms of the dedicated post figure.

The bulk of the 235 roles were in coordinating, managerial and general support posts. The other key categories identified were recruitment, training, HR, and administration. As was the case with financing, there is a very wide variation in the number of posts across forces. Some forces state that they have no paid dedicated posts at all, whilst others of similar size have quite sizeable teams.

There is a wide variation in structures for CiP-related teams. Some forces have quite distinct teams for Specials and PSVs, whilst others have unified Citizens in Policing teams.

Much of the resource in respect of Volunteer Police Cadets is provided on a voluntary basis, or 'in kind' from Regulars and police staff.

Most of the OPCCs which responded in respect of staffing identified that they have at least one paid role, or part of a role, which is dedicated to supporting volunteers.

Research and Evaluation

The Benchmarking Survey identifies at least 38 reviews undertaken across forces in recent years, ranging from quite comprehensive strategic reviews, to smaller scale evaluations and consultations.

There were 26 'internal' reviews (undertaken by force internal resources) identified by forces, plus an additional six processes which seemed to amount to surveys rather than more comprehensive review exercises. The data from the forces is variable about the coverage of the reviews, and that detail is not provided at all for some of them, but it is clear that there are several frequently recurring areas of focus: ranks and leadership; training; recruitment; retention; usage of Specials across the force and particularly in specialist roles.

There were also 12 'external' reviews identified (where resources external to the force were commissioned). The detail provided by forces is variable, but there seems to be a quite wide mix of providers, including academia, private companies or consultancies, and some undertaken by individuals with an expertise in the field. Where the focus of the reviews is shared, that content is consistent with the above areas of focus in respect of internal reviews. In addition to partnering work between forces and the IPSCJ, three other ongoing partnership relationships are identified, all of them with universities.

It is difficult to estimate costings off the limited information supplied, but given the number of reviews, and the evident large scale of a number of the review exercises, a broad estimation in the region of £250,000 for the overall value of the work would not seem wayward.

Given the scale of the review work undertaken within forces, there are evident challenges in terms of how much learning there is beyond and across forces from this work, and in contrast how much duplication of work across very similar issues, likely identifying very similar learning, there has been across such a high number of review processes. Whilst local evaluation and improvement work is not to be discouraged, there is a clear argument for finding ways to make this multiplicity of review processes become 'more than the sum of their parts', and to find ways to coordinate the drawing together and sharing of learning and best practice. In some cases it appears these challenges exist

within forces as well as between them, where there is evidence of several rounds of review processes.

The national Citizens in Policing Board action plan is looking to develop a more structured piloting programme, which would seem to have merit in providing a greater focus and structure across the testing of new practice approaches. There is also an ongoing national exercise to identify 'innovative' and 'interesting' practice across forces, to again help coordinate the development of new ways of working, helping to more quickly identify, disseminate, learn from and evaluate promising practice across the field of police volunteering.

Diversity

The data available for ethnicity of PSVs varies across forces; in many forces there is still a sizeable proportion of the PSV cohort for whom their ethnicity is not recorded, and several forces reflected their inability to report this information.

The data quality for Volunteer Police Cadets ethnicity is stronger, reflecting the particular focus within the national programme upon social inclusion and community engagement. The data shared within the Benchmarking Surveys is still incomplete, but presents a much fuller picture than that available for PSVs. For Volunteer Police Cadets, based upon the surveys, a figure between 30-40% for ethnic minority representation seems a reasonable estimation.

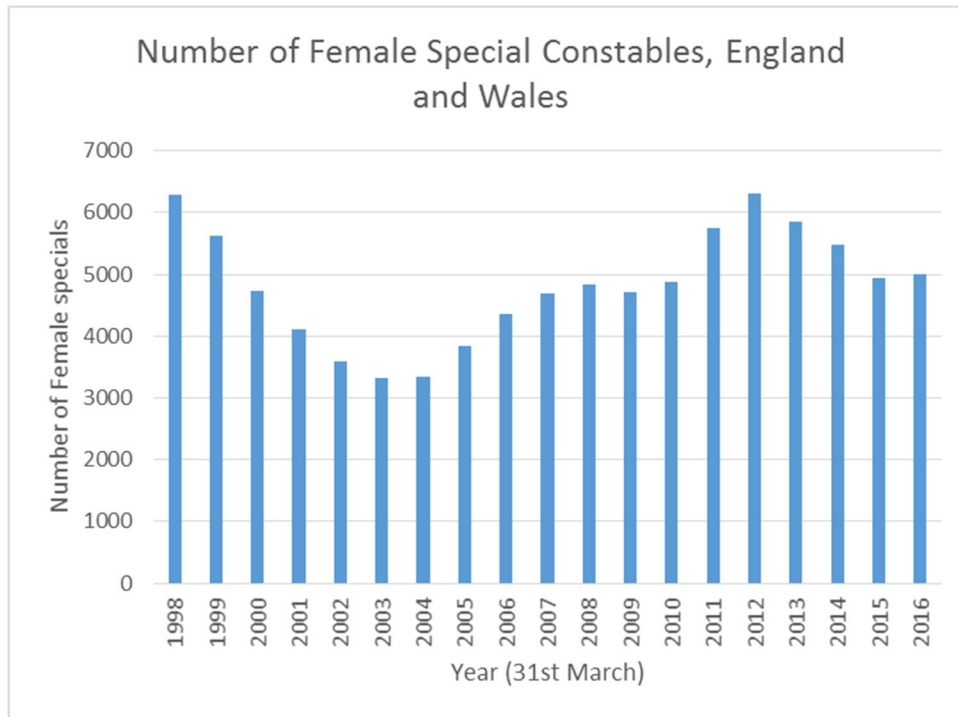
As is the case with PSVs, for OPCC volunteers the data is collected in most areas in respect of ethnicity, but data quality and coverage is patchy, and there is limited consistency in categories used to collect data, rendering comparisons at a national level difficult.

In respect of gender, again there is patchiness in the data provided through the Benchmarking Surveys for PSVs, Volunteer Police Cadets and OPCC volunteers. For those PSVs where gender data was provided by forces (two thirds of the overall cohort of PSVs) 53% were female and 47% male; this proportion of just over half female is significantly higher female representation than for Special Constables, for which females represent approximately a third of the total number. From the data provided by forces for the gender of Cadets, it is possible to draw a rough estimation in the region of 48% female, 52% male; whilst this figure is approximate, it once again seems much higher female representation than for Special Constables, and indeed for Regular police officers.

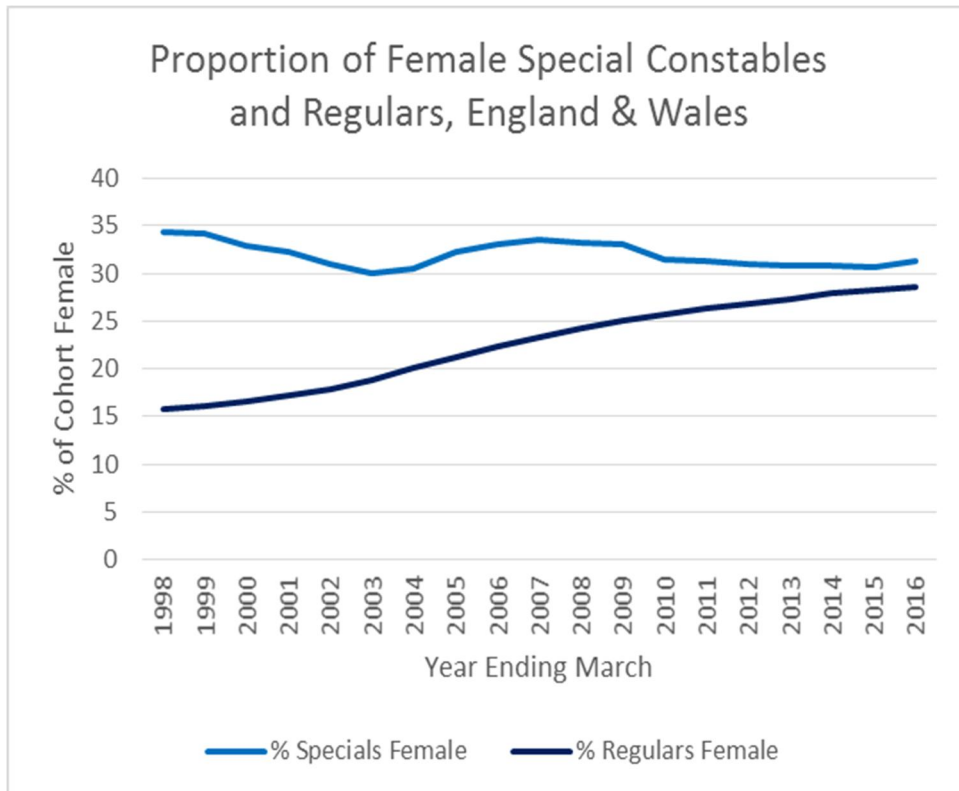
For Special Constables, data on gender and ethnicity is systematically collated and published at national level as part of the force Annual Data Returns. This does not mean that there are not shortcomings with elements of the data, but nevertheless it does mean that there is a much greater statistical picture across forces and at a national level over a period of time in terms of the gender and ethnicity of Specials, compared to the limited data available for other police volunteers. The next two sections of this report look at the gender and ethnicity of Special Constables, based primarily upon the nationally published data.

Gender and the Special Constabulary

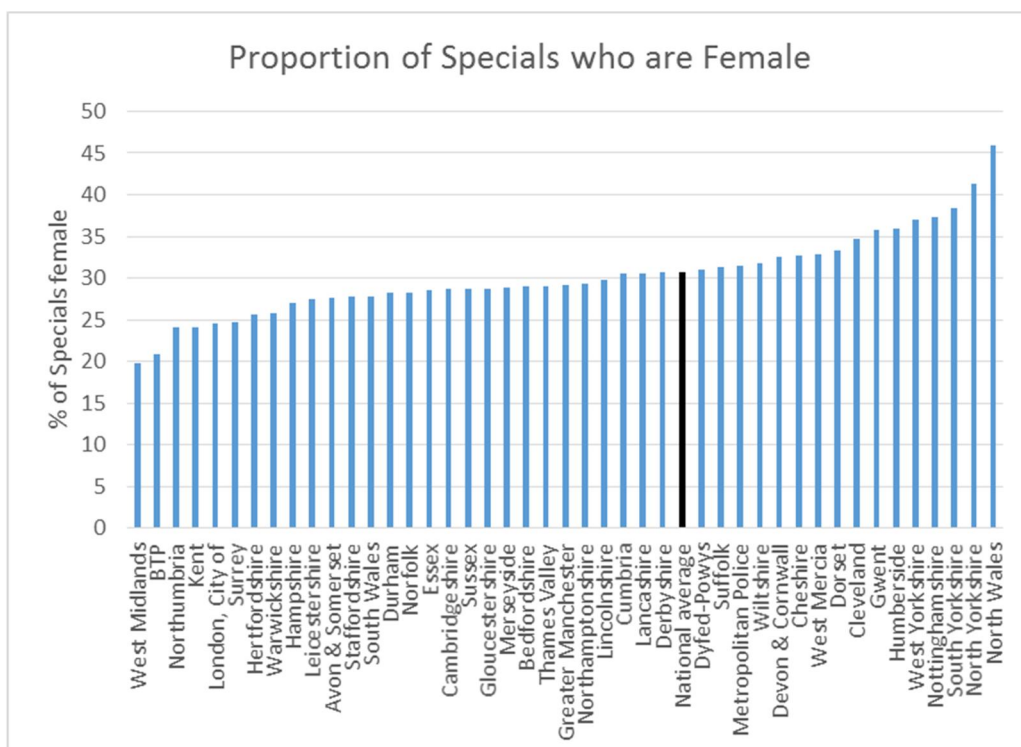
The total number of female Special Constables over the past two decades has broadly followed the wider trend of Specials numbers as a whole. There are fewer female Special Constables in 2016 than there were in 1988.



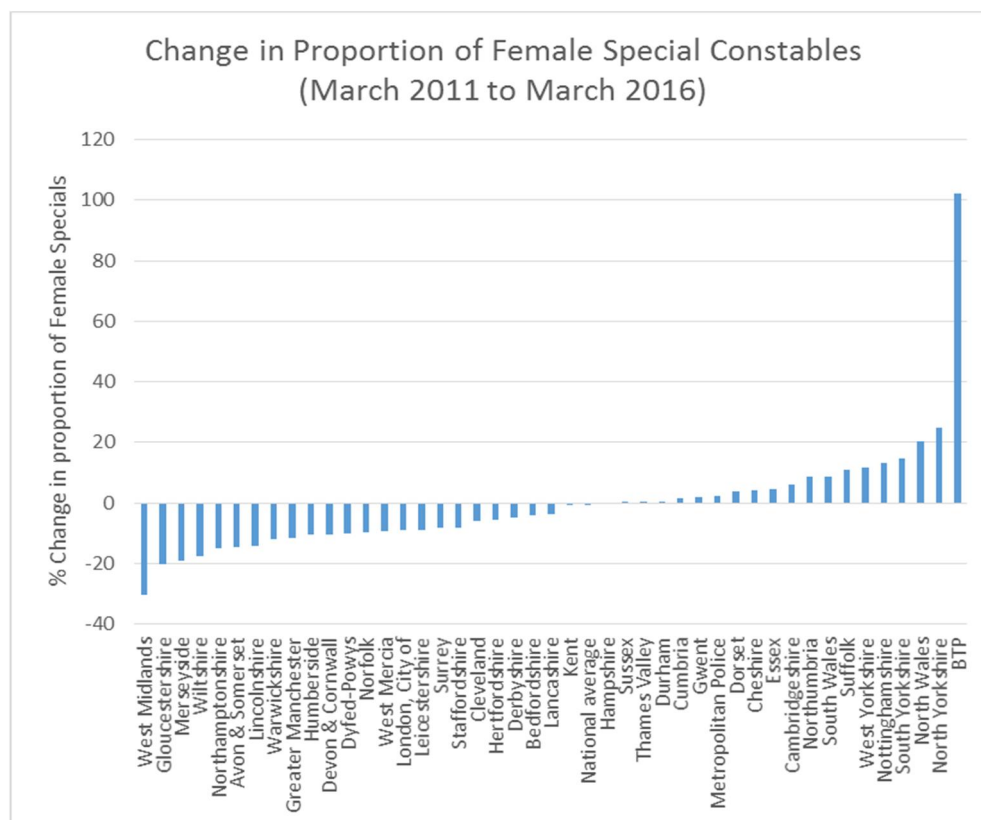
The proportion of Special Constables who are female has remained largely the same since the last 1990s, consistently in the range of 30-35%. The proportion of female Specials is slightly down from the level it was in 1998. During that same period since the late nineties, the proportion of Regular Officers who are female has almost doubled from near 15% to approaching 30%. In 1998 therefore there was a significant gap between gender representation in Specials and Regulars; by 2016 that gap has all but closed.



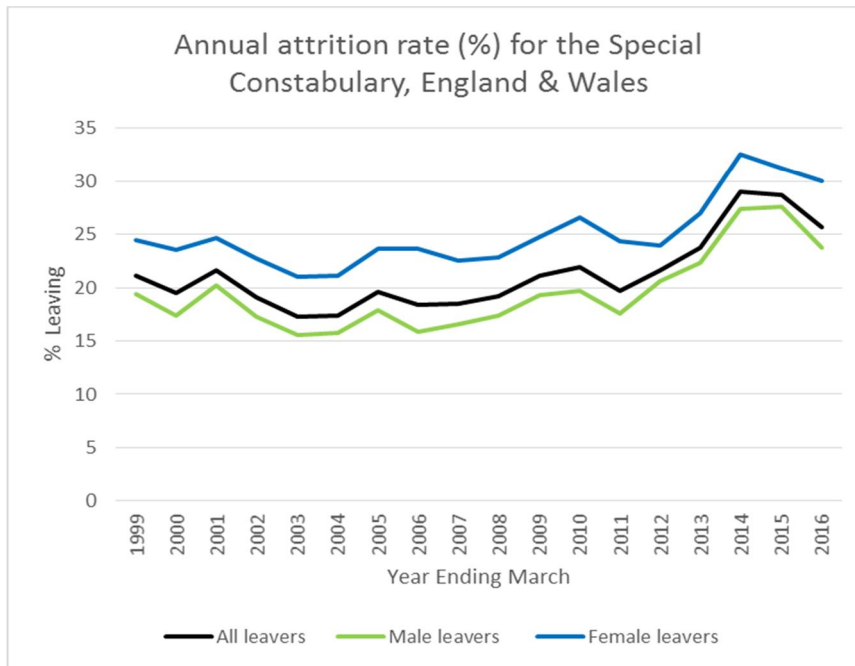
Looking at gender proportions at a force level, there is quite sizeable variation. Some forces, such as North Wales and North Yorkshire, have over 40% female Specials, some forces such as the West Midlands and BTP have nearer 20%.



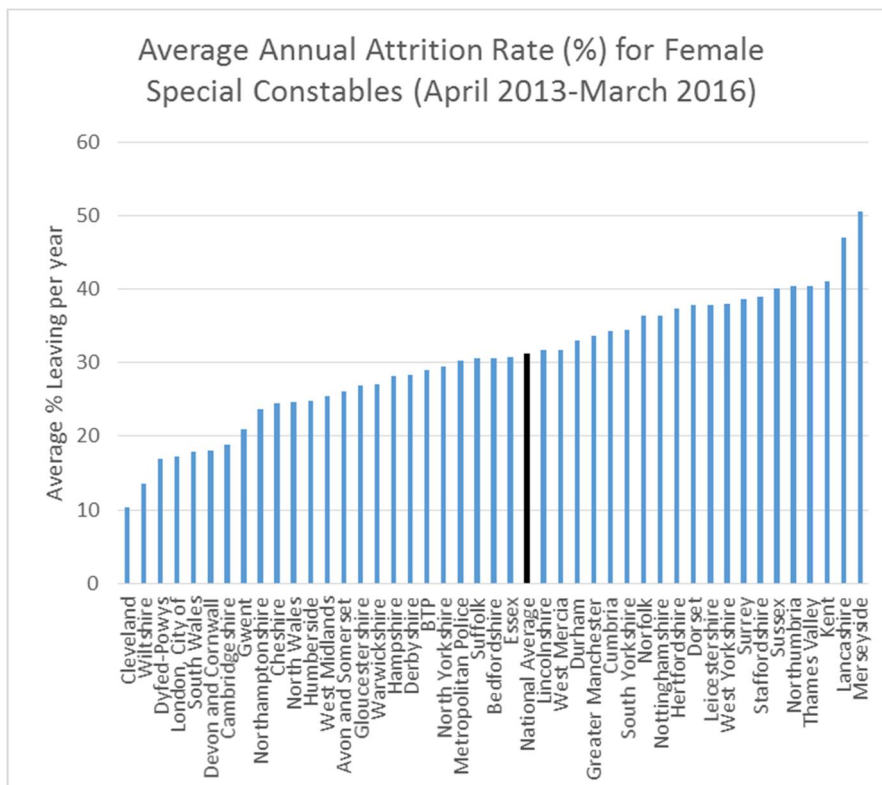
In terms of change of gender representation, again there is a considerable variation across forces. Looking at the past 5 years period (2011-2016) the graph below shows the change in proportion of Specials who are female in each force. The BTP represent an outlier in terms of percentage change, but with the caveat that the number of female Specials in BTP were very low in 2011. At the other end of the spectrum, several forces have seen negative shifts in the proportion of Specials who are female in recent years.



Earlier in this report, attrition rates for Special Constables were discussed (Pages 18-21). It is interesting to look at the attrition rates of Specials in respect of gender. The graph below shows the national attrition rate of Specials by gender since the late nineties. The black line is the overall Specials attrition rate (as shown in the graph on page 19), the green line shows the attrition rate for male Specials, and the blue line for female Specials. In every year since 1999, the proportion of female Specials who have left during the year has been higher than for the proportion of male Specials. In the latest data, for year ending March 2016, the attrition rate for female Specials is more than 5% higher than for male Specials.

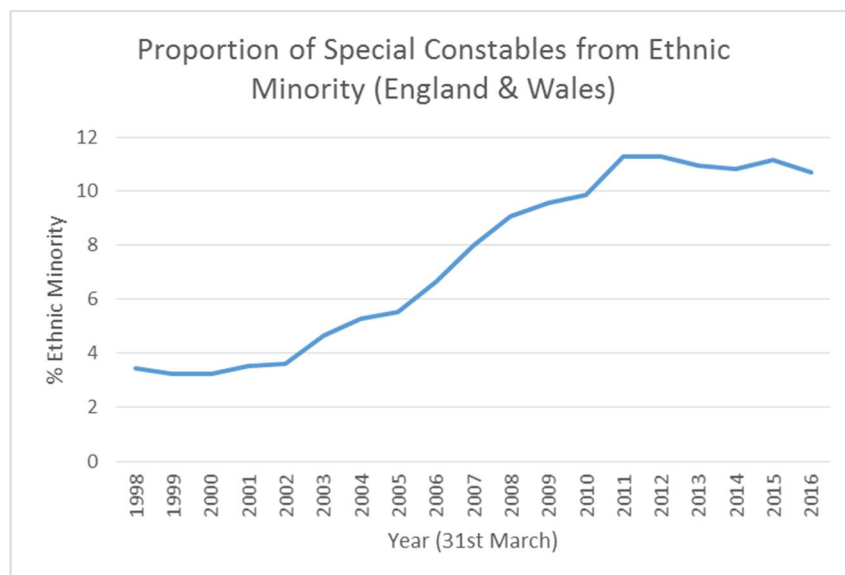


Looking at the attrition rates for female Specials at force level, the graph below illustrates a wide variation nationally. A handful of forces have attrition rates at 40%, meaning that on average over the past three years, 4 out of 10 female Specials have left each year. Lancashire and Merseyside have attrition rates for female Specials approaching 50%, meaning on average half the female cohort will leave over the course of a year. In contrast, several forces have much lower attrition within their female Special cohorts, with figures of well under 20%. As with so much across the data on police volunteering, the national average masks a very wide variation both above and below the national average figure.

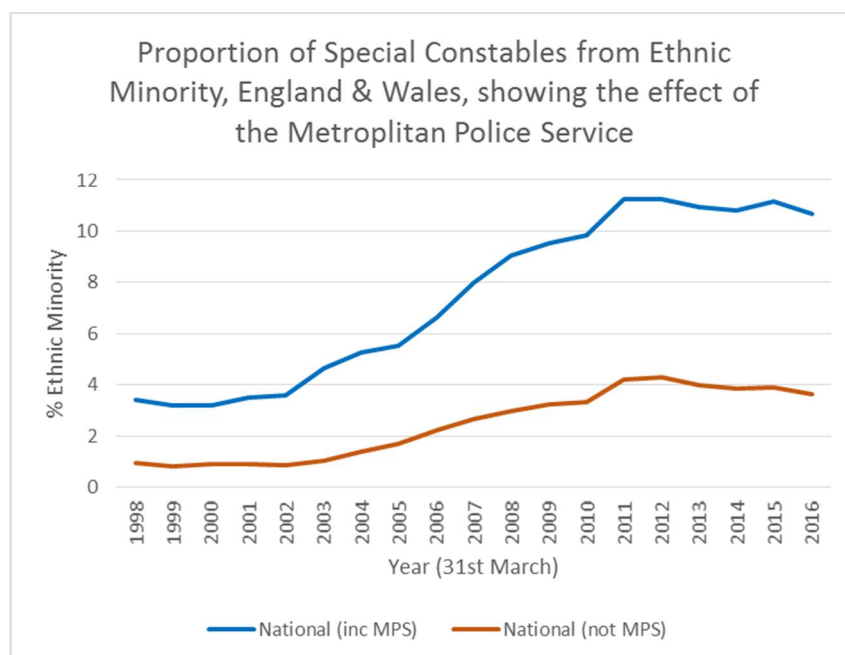


Ethnic Minority Representation in the Special Constabulary

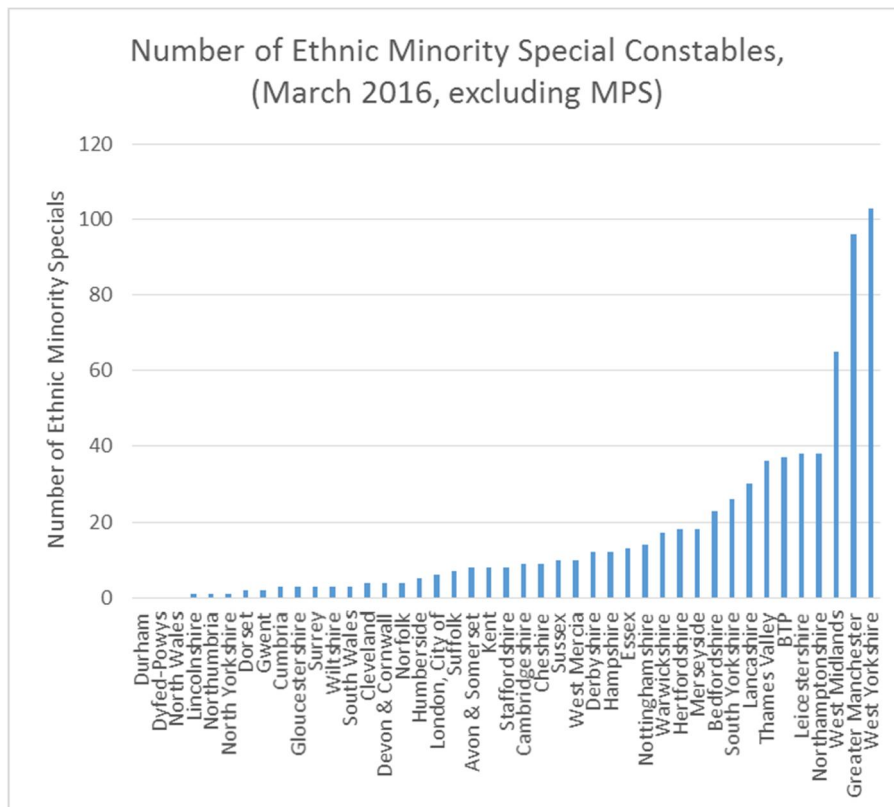
The proportion of ethnic minority Special Constables has grown at a national level over the past two decades, albeit the past five years have seen a plateauing from this upwards trend.



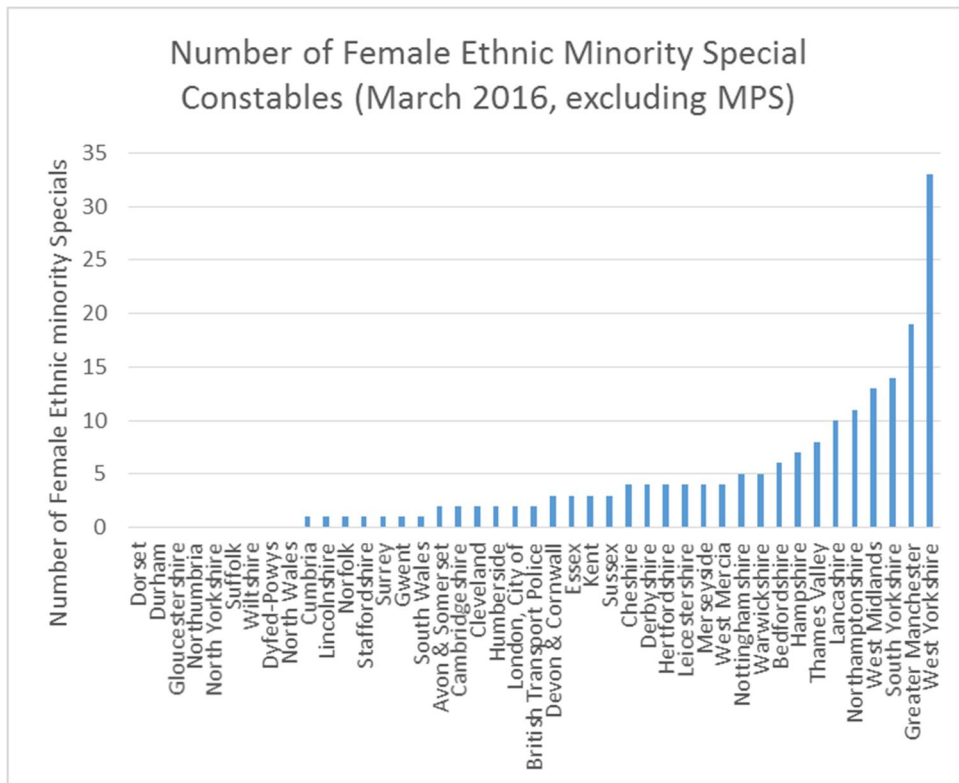
Six out of ten ethnic minority Specials serve with the Metropolitan Special Constabulary. In the MPS a third of Specials are from an ethnic minority. Nationally for all other forces excluding the MPS, the collective figure is less than 5%. The graph below demonstrates the fundamental effect the growth in ethnic minority Specials in the MPS has had on the national picture.



The raw numbers of ethnic minority Specials are low in the majority of forces nationally, as shown in the graph below. Almost half of Special Constabularies nationally have ten or fewer ethnic minority Specials.



These low numbers are particularly stark in respect of female Specials from an ethnic minority, as shown in the graph below. For almost three quarters of the Special Constabularies in England and Wales, it is possible to count the female ethnic minority Specials within their cohort on one hand. In nine forces there are none at all.



Contribution

Hours

The Benchmarking Survey represents the first systematic gathering of data across police volunteer hours, for OPCC volunteers, PSVs, Specials and Cadets collectively. The data shows that police volunteering is an activity undertaken on a vast scale, with over 5 million hours completed each year.

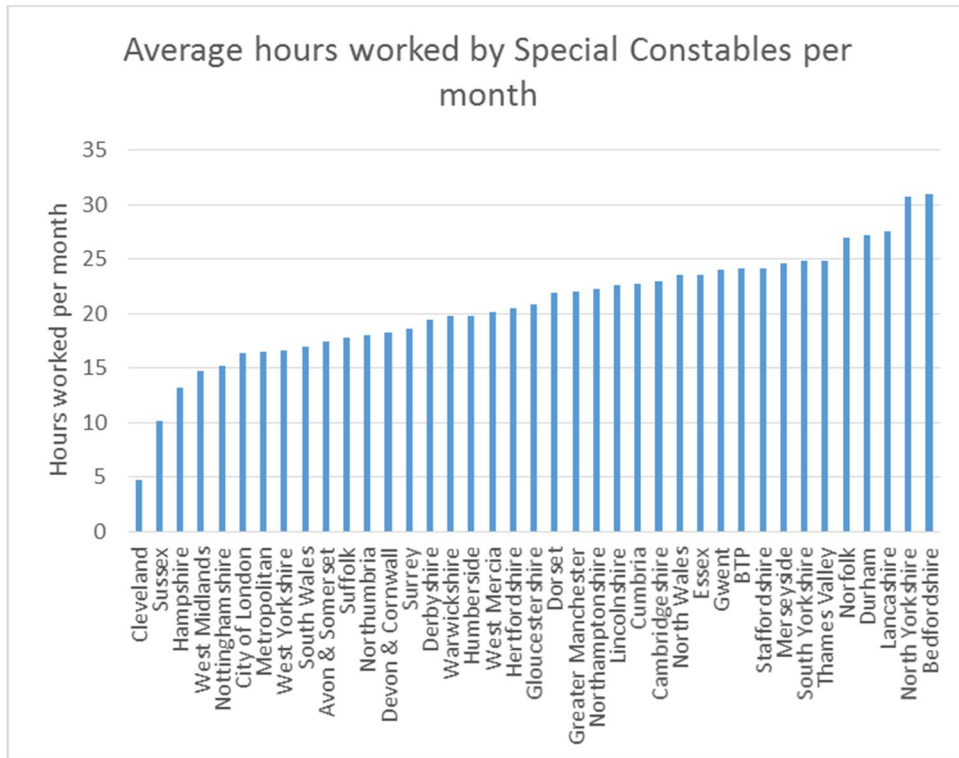
	Estimated Annual Hours Served in England & Wales
Special Constable	3,650,000*
Police Support Volunteer	650,000*
OPCC Volunteers	60,000*
Volunteer Police Cadets	1,100,000* **
Total	5,460,000*

*An estimated figure, based upon incomplete force returns. There were returns on this data from most forces for Specials, with only 5 missing, so the degree of estimation on that figure is less significant. For the other categories of volunteers, the numbers are estimated from responses from approximately 60-65% of forces, so remain more approximate estimations.

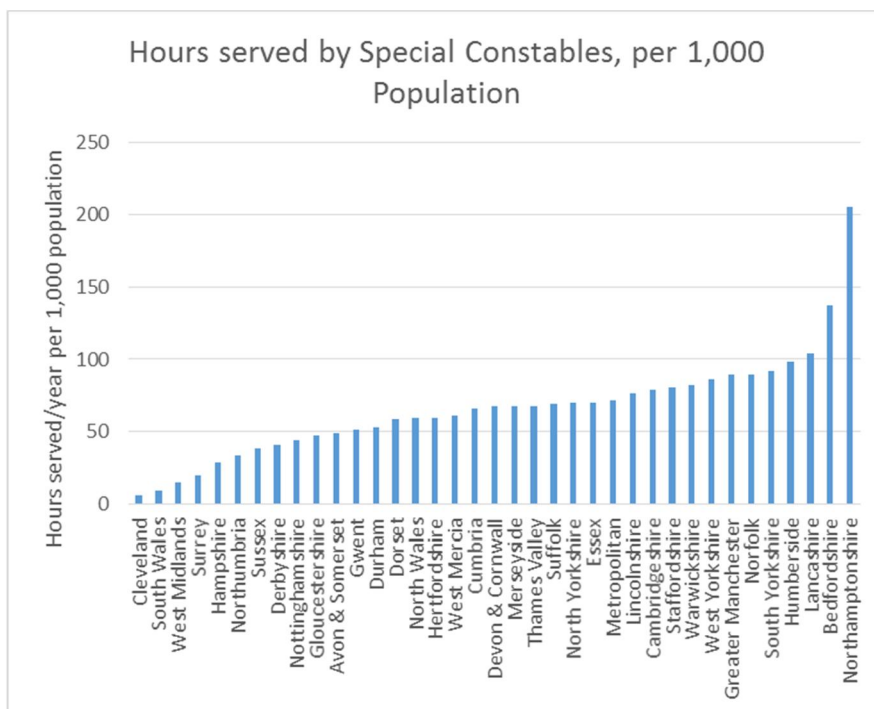
** This Volunteer Police Cadets figure includes all hours of Cadet activity, and not just hours specifically volunteering in the community. The figure for direct community volunteering contribution from Cadets, based on current headcount, would be estimated to be in the region of 400,000 hours.

There is a lack of sophistication in current methodologies for placing financial value against police volunteering hours. Clearly any comparators between salaries of Regular officers and Specials, or comparison against particular wage levels (e.g. minimum wage) for PSV activity, can be critiqued as over-simplified. Developing more sophisticated financial modelling of the cash-equivalence of volunteering contribution is an important strategic gap to be filled for the Citizens in Policing agenda, in terms of identifying the business case for investment. Looking at the financial value of police volunteering in simple terms of hours worked and salary equivalence, a value somewhere in the range of **£45-75m** would seem reasonable from the hours figures above. However, there are arguments that such approaches are over-simplified, and also that they do not fully identify the financial value of the range of benefits brought through police volunteering.

The data on PSV hours at force level has limitations which make it difficult to produce a national graph of the spread between forces, although looking across the data it is evident that there are very wide variations. The graph below shows the distribution of average hours worked per month for Special Constables across the forces of England and Wales. As with so many aspects of police volunteering, the variations between forces are large.



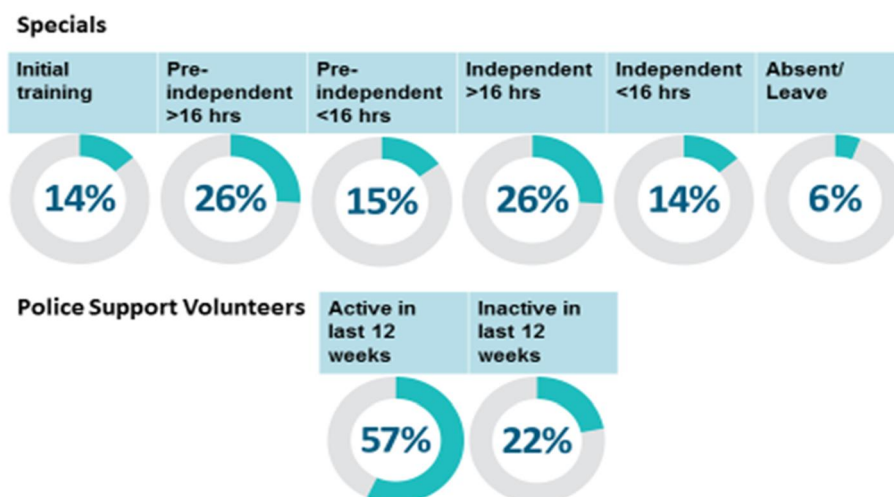
One potential measure for exploring the comparative level of activity of Special Constabularies across forces is to look at the hours served by Specials, set against the population of force areas. The graph below (which omits BTP, as it is not possible to express BTP statistics in respect of population), shows the comparative activity levels in terms of hours served per 1,000 population in force area. Looked at in this way, the level of activity of Special Constabularies varies hugely across England and Wales.



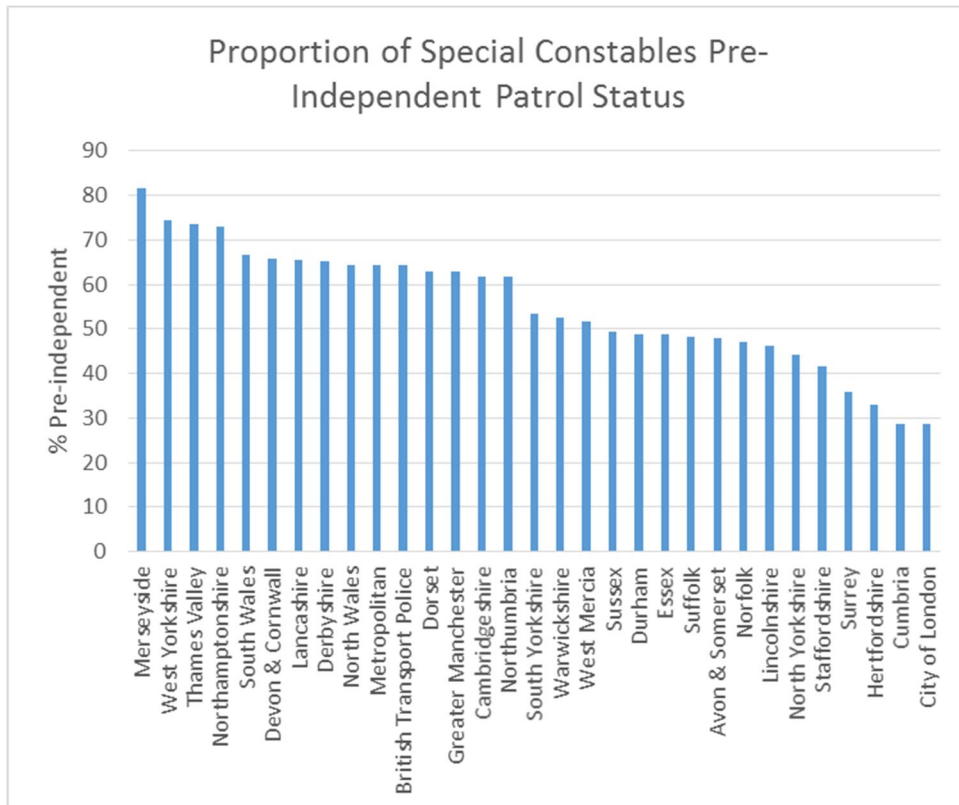
Capability

Cohort activity

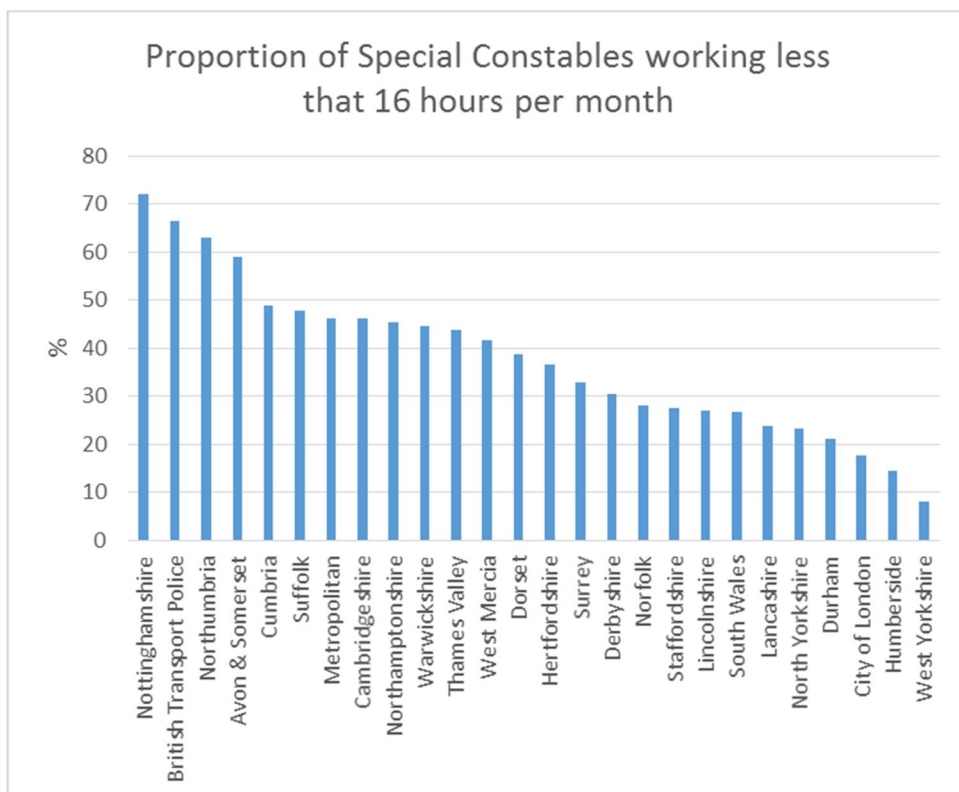
The infographic below shows the unevenness in the activity levels of individuals across both Specials and PSVs. Broadly one in five of the Specials cohort nationally is either in training (14%) or on long-term leave of absence (6%). Across the remaining 80%, a third of that cohort are reported as having not worked the 16 hours minimum, and two thirds reported to have done so. For those Specials who have completed training, nationally broadly half are still pre-independent status and half have reached independent status. Only one in four Specials are of independent patrol status and working over 16 hours. For PSVs the data provided by forces is less complete, but suggests almost six out of ten PSVs are active, about a fifth are inactive, and data is not available for the others.



The graph below shows the spread of data for the proportion of Special Constables who are pre-independent status (including in initial training). For slightly over half of forces, that figure is over 50%, and for a small number it rises to be in the region of 70%



The proportion of Specials working less than 16 hours per week is also highly variable across forces nationally. The graph below shows the spread of data for forces, with a range from over 70% not working 16 hours in one force, to fewer than one in ten Specials not doing so in other force areas.



Specialist roles

One element of the capability of police volunteers is their contribution across the range of policing activity, including in more specialised areas of police work. The Benchmarking Surveys reflected a very large range of specialist roles for both Specials and PSVs.

Touching on issues of consistency (which are addressed in the following section of this report in more detail), there is evident patchiness nationally across these local developments of specialist roles, and also evident ‘duplication’ and ‘parallel’ development of roles across different forces.

The breadth of specialist roles across police volunteering



There has been significant interest in the potential for police volunteers – both PSVs and Specials – to develop into roles addressing cyber-crime and other cyber-based threats of harm. The data nationally remains somewhat patchy in terms of the progression of this work to date. There is a funded pilot project which is developing new models of working, and also significant development of ‘cyber-Specials’ within the National Crime Agency. Overall, across the surveys 19 forces identify that they either have Specials or PSVs already engaged in cyber-based roles, or that they have an intention to build that capacity in the near future; this may reflect a slight undercount of the reality

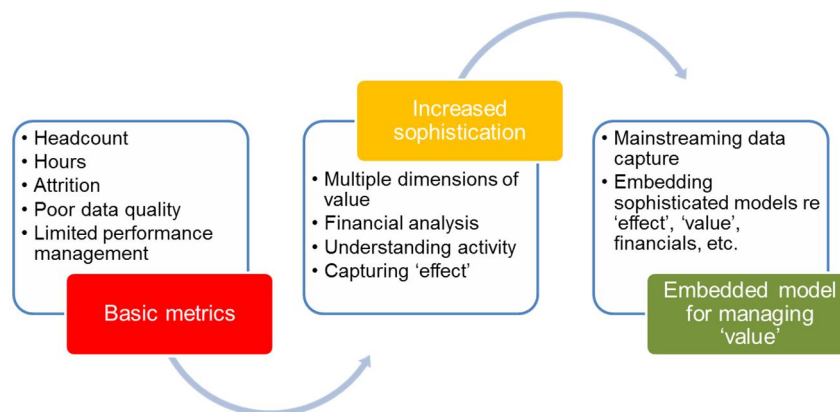
of such developments given gaps in survey returns. Picking up again on the issue of consistency, there are questions as to the degree that this represents a coordinated process, with liaison and learning across forces, and the degree to which there are numerous separate developments at local level. The reality seems to be a mix of both, with some coordinated development of cyber-related roles, but also some developments which are less integrated into a wider picture.

Approaches to Performance and Value

There are clear limitations to current performance models across police volunteering. In respect of the Special Constabulary, in reality few force approaches stretch beyond monitoring headcount, hours worked, and retention rates, sometimes with additional monitoring in respect of progression through processes (e.g. recruitment, reaching independent status) and in respect of cohort characteristics and in particular diversity (e.g. monitoring ethnicity). There is little engagement with questions of 'outputs' and of 'outcomes', capturing the 'effect' achieved the Special Constabulary.

The situation in respect of PSVs tends to be even less evolved in respect of performance approaches. In reality, there is an absence of performance data, monitoring and management across some PSV contexts in forces. In others, there is more of an engagement with data, but typically across very basic measures, such as headcount and basic process monitoring.

The model below shows the desired steps for moving from a performance approach characterised by very basic metrics and by limited understandings of value, to a value approach that is more sophisticated and embedded.



Consistency

The data throughout this report has repeatedly pointed to substantial variation across forces. The scale of differences in terms of police volunteering between forces in effect means that national 'averages' and 'totals', and talk of a 'national picture', are typically misleading because the realities on the ground are very different in different force areas. This is particularly marked in terms of the scale of PSVs, where some forces have very few and some have large numbers, and some forces have developed a wide range of roles whilst others have not. There is also an enormous variation in the financial data and in the posts and infrastructure available to support police volunteers.

The policy and practice across Specials, PSVs, OPCC volunteers and Cadets is in all four cases highly inconsistent across different forces (albeit there is a greater sense of national programme and overall structure for Cadets). This is a key feature of the current landscape, and one which the national CiP strategy has identified and intends to address.

It is important to recognise that not all variation is a bad thing: local areas should be responding to local needs. Much about voluntarism lends itself to local ideas, initiative, innovation, invention and individualisation and there needs to be a balance to avoid overly rigid and restrictive national frameworks which become a stifling 'one size fits all' model.

However, as shown in the diagram below, there are key aspects where the current picture presents as being 'under-regulated' and unnecessarily inconsistent. Inconsistency impacts on key elements including transferability, scaling and joint working, and mutual aid. The absence in key respects of a consistency of standards also risks undermining credibility; a framework of professional standards is a critical element of the further professionalisation of police volunteering. The upcoming legislative developments in 2017, which include empowering Chief Constables to give greater powers to non-warranted police volunteers, also prompts a need for greater codification of standards. Too great a degree of variation can also lead to a great deal of wastefulness in terms of duplication of effort through individual forces developing multiple approaches to the same practice and policy issues.



Connectivity

The Benchmarking Survey identifies a significant amount of cross-force joint working in respect of police volunteers. This is primarily in relation to Special Constabularies. The figures in the table below probably reflect an undercount of the real position, as the data supplied about cross-force activities is unlikely to have been comprehensive in all the force surveys. The figures do show a significant degree of work across forces in respect of Specials, but also reflect that much more is possible. There seems to be less tangible collaboration across PSVs. Elements of OPCC volunteers, for example Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs), do have some degree of partnering arrangements across forces, even if just in terms of training and conferencing events. The context in relation to Volunteer Police Cadets is a different one, in that there is a greater degree of national programme and coordination.

	Number of forces in benchmarking exercise undertaking joint activity
Joint operations	11
Initial training	8
Leadership development	4
Specialist development/CPD	4
Marketing and recruitment	2
Broader working relationship	5

There are several examples of collaboration between police and fire services in terms of volunteers. Primarily these relate to PSVs, and to joint service Cadet arrangements.

There is an argument that the national programme design and infrastructure in respect of Cadets brings several strengths, which could be emulated in national and regional coordinating arrangements for police volunteering more generally.

In terms of coordination, communication and support across forces at regional and national level for the PSVs and Specials agenda, at the national level there is an ongoing redesign of structures. Regionally, there is something of a patchwork of different arrangements, with some regions having stronger arrangements in place than others. The current picture in respect of regional meeting arrangements is reflected in the table below.

	Regional Coordination Arrangements for PSVs	Regional Coordination Arrangements for Special Constables
Wales	Citizens in Policing practitioner meeting chaired by funded regional co-ordinator (GMP, shared with North-West), meets quarterly. Strategic CiP meeting chaired by ACC (North Wales), also meets quarterly.	
North-West	Funded regional co-ordinator post (GMP) chairs quarterly practitioner meeting. Separate meetings, but PSVs meet in pm after morning SC meeting.	Funded regional co-ordinator post (GMP) chairs quarterly practitioner meeting. Separate meetings, but SCs meet on the morning of same day PSVs meet pm.
North-East/Yorkshire & Humberside	A quarterly meeting of force PSV leads plus fire service volunteer leads, chaired by the regional PSV rep (Humberside). Separate to Special Constable meeting.	A quarterly meeting of Special Chief officers, chaired by ASCCO regional rep (Humberside). No specific coordination/support resource. Separate to PSV meeting.
East Midlands	East Midlands Regional Special Constabulary and Volunteering Board, meets quarterly. The Board is currently reviewing ToR; historically it has focused more upon Special Constables but in future intends to cover all volunteer strands. Chaired by ACC (Derbyshire). Supported/administered by PSV/Specials admin support officer (Derbyshire). Mixture of attendees. <i>West Mercia & Warwickshire have also been attending this group in past year, as there has not been active arrangement in West Midlands region.</i>	
West Midlands	No current meeting.	No current meeting, but there are plans to develop a meeting involving the Special Chief Officers, and other key stakeholders. ToR to be determined at the first meeting in December. Possibilities of a virtual/remote meeting model as part of the new arrangement.
East	PSV meeting chaired by PSV regional rep (PSV lead, Hertfordshire), meets quarterly. Attendees the force PSV leads. Separate to Special Constable meeting arrangement.	Bi-monthly Regional Specials Meeting. Chaired by DCC (Bedfordshire). Attendance, SC Chief officers, also various programme leads for Specials in forces, plus CoP attendee. There was a regional coordination role, but funding was not agreed across all forces and ceased.
South-East/London	PSV meeting, quarterly, chaired by regional rep (Hampshire), attended by TVP, Hampshire, Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Met. CoL and BTP invited but have not as yet attended.	London Special Constabulary meeting, quarterly, chaired by Commander (City of London) and attended by Chief officers of Met, CoL and BTP. No specific regional coordination/support, arrangements organised via Commanders PA. Discussions ongoing about regional co-ordination funding.
South-West	Meet twice a year as PSVs only, and twice a year collectively across CiP agenda jointly with Specials. Chaired by DCC (Devon & Cornwall) Recently agreed to fund regional CiP co-ordinator role.	Meet twice a year as Specials only, and twice a year collectively across CiP agenda jointly with PSVs. Chaired by DCC (Devon & Cornwall) Recently agreed to fund regional CiP co-ordinator role.

Conclusion

This report represents the biggest exercise to date in drawing together data across police volunteering. However, it is recognised that significant strategic gaps remain, and it is fundamental that the position in respect of data and evidence is majorly enhanced as the national strategy work is taken forward.

Pointers towards better data management, evaluation and ‘evidence-based’ practice

The data within this Benchmarking Exercise is still focused primarily upon headcount of volunteers, their activity (expressed in basic terms of hours served), and basic cohort characteristics (for example, recruitment and attrition, diversity). Even in terms of this foundational data, there are shortcomings, even with respect to Specials where some national data has been gathered over a prolonged period, and especially in respect of PSVs, where major gaps remain.

Future effort in respect of data and evidence across police volunteering should focus upon:

- Closing the strategic gaps in respect of this foundational data (i.e. data such as headcount and hours), in particular relating to PSVs;
- Building much stronger insight in respect of volunteer careers and experience;
- Building a much more developed and sophisticated picture of need, activity, outputs and outcomes;
- Enhancing understandings of financial data;
- Creating stronger models of evaluation;
- Establishing a greater coherence and consistency of data collection and dissemination, to allow more accessible and reliable comparison between different forces;
- Developing more mature models of evidence-based practice and of performance management, based upon all of the above, and recognising the multiple dimensions of ‘value’ across police volunteering.

Future options for developing the Benchmarking Exercise work

The model followed within the Benchmarking Exercise, of developing a single point of collection and analysis for data across police volunteering, seems to have considerable merit and the concept of benchmarking could be expanded further, as has been proposed within the Citizens in Policing strategy. Future focus for benchmarking could include:

- Further work to develop the ‘phase 1’ focus upon police volunteering, seeking to address strategic gaps in our knowledge base, and to keep up to date the picture generated within this work;
- Work to identify practice across the Citizens in Policing agenda internationally, and compare it with work within England and Wales, identifying potential learning;
- Similarly, work to identify best practice, innovative practice and the evidence-base beyond the policing sector, and again to identify potential learning;

- Work to expand the benchmarking approach across the aspects of Citizens in Policing beyond direct police volunteering.

Potential Next steps

This report represents a first step in terms of better capturing at a national level the data across police volunteering. Core messages from the findings include that there are significant strategic gaps in our data and knowledge-base across police volunteering which need to be closed, and that the national picture which begins to be revealed is one of major variation and inconsistency across forces. The report also points to the scale and significance of police volunteering; a large number of people are directly involved in policing through volunteering, serving millions of hours of their time annually, and impacting across a diverse range of policing activities and outcomes. Hopefully this report will stimulate policing across England and Wales to learn more about these volunteers, and about the very wide range and sheer scale of activities which they undertake, the outcomes that they impact upon, and the potential to have an even greater impact in the future.

Potential next steps, building upon the contents of this report, might include:

- Utilising findings within the report to help prioritise and detail elements of the national Citizens in Policing strategic action plan;
- Evolving over time this approach of data collation and analysis into an online knowledge hub model, linking to website development across the Citizens in Policing agenda;
- Building and delivering future phases of the benchmarking work;
- Using the contents of this report within activity to develop policy and academic networks in respect of Citizens in Policing, drawing in expertise across the agenda, and helping to better focus, coordinate and disseminate policy and research activity.

The national data benchmarking exercise was developed, managed and analysed on behalf of the national Citizens in Policing Strategic Board by the **Institute for Public Safety, Crime and Justice**, University of Northampton. A key part of the Institute's work programme is its Centre for Citizens in Policing. The Centre is committed to working strategically with forces nationally and internationally to develop the evidence-base across police volunteering and wider citizen direct involvement, to translate the evidence-base into real improvements in experience and impact, and to support and stimulate the debate about the future for citizen involvement in policing and public safety.

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